

£19m payouts to destroy eggs and hens

MacGregor unveils plan to ease crisis

- Four million hens are to be culled and 400 million eggs destroyed to ease the glut caused by the salmonella scare
- Many Conservative MPs said the £19 million aid package for the egg production industry was inadequate
- Under the scheme producers will be paid 30p per dozen for eggs which will be destroyed in incinerators or dumps
- The Minister of Agriculture also announced several new measures to counter the spread of salmonella

By Philip Webster and John Young

Four hundred million eggs are to be destroyed and four million hens culled from the country's laying flock under a £19 million package outlined by the Government yesterday to help the egg production industry recover from the salmonella scare.

The farming industry reacted cautiously last night, welcoming the emergency measures but arguing that more is needed to prevent companies going out of business.

But Mr John MacGregor, the Minister of Agriculture,

faced a mixed reaction from Conservative MPs after he outlined his moves in the Commons to stabilize the market.

Many Conservatives criticized the plan as inadequate for failing to help producers who have already slaughtered their flocks. They predicted that despite Mr MacGregor's statement that there would be

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no more money he might have to find additional help if the measures failed to ease the crisis.

Others went along with the complaint levelled by many Labour MPs that the Government was paying too much attention to needs of the farming lobby, at the expense of the consumer.

Mr Tim Devlin, MP for Stockton, South, shouted "outrageous" as Mr MacGregor announced the plan, and said later that the Government should not be bailing out the farmers.

Under the scheme the Government is to provide payments of about £10 million to Britain's 3,100 egg packers to destroy surplus eggs for a four-week period beginning tomorrow.

They will be paid 30 p a dozen, which was around the sum being received by the producer a week ago, for up to 396 million eggs. Today the producer is receiving around 20 p a dozen because of the slump. In normal times the figure is about 50 p a dozen.

About £1 million has been allocated for the local authorities who will be responsible for destroying the eggs in incinerators or dumps.

Under the second phase of the package payments worth £7 million will be made to producers to enable four million hens, about 10 per cent of the laying flock, to be culled.

They will be paid £1.50 a bird for hens in the 18 to 30 weeks age range.

The Ministry of Agriculture will supervise the culling and £1 million has been allocated for the extra costs of slaughterhouses and veterinary surgeons, who supervise the slaughtering if it takes place on the farms.

Mr MacGregor also outlined new measures to tackle the spread of salmonella.

These include more strin-

gent bacteriological monitoring of animal protein for animal feed, registration of breeding flocks and hatcheries for hygiene control and strengthening of controls related to imported animal protein.

Although the hygiene codes recently introduced to counter salmonella are voluntary Mr MacGregor made plain that consideration was being given to making parts of them statutory.

Mrs Edwina Currie, who resigned as junior health minister on Friday over her remark that most of the country's egg production was infected, was absent from the chamber.

Senior ministers were last night discounting suggestions that she would make an early return to the Government.

Mr MacGregor again took the opportunity of emphasizing that "it is not the case that most eggs are infected" and also stated that it was not the case that "most egg production" was infected.

He was accused by Dr David Clark, Labour's agriculture spokesman, of avoiding the main issue of clearing up the confusion over whether there was a real threat from eggs.

Throughout the exchanges Mr MacGregor insisted that the risk from eggs was "very, very small indeed".

He spoke of the difficulty of eradicating salmonella. "No country in the world has mastered the problems of salmonella in animals and poultry," he said.

"It is in the best interests of the consumer and industry alike that the full facts should be put before the public: the very low degree of risk, particularly if members of the public and housewives in the kitchen also follow the proper hygiene practices."

Dr Clark accused the Government of complacency. The key to restoring public confidence in the safety of eating eggs was addressing the extent of salmonella in eggs and poultry, he said.

Mr MacGregor said that it would not be possible to make payments to those who had already culled their flocks. "I do not think that it would be right to do that. We have moved with great speed. All producers, who are in a very difficult situation, will benefit indirectly and they will benefit."

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Arrest ends armed siege in Coventry suburb



Police running to take up positions around the house where the two gunmen took refuge. One committed suicide, the other gave himself up.

Young orders inquiry into County NatWest

By Cliff Feltham

The Government last night ordered an investigation into the affairs of County NatWest, the investment arm of Britain's largest high street bank, and the role it played in the £659 million takeover by Blue Arrow, the employment group, of the US agency Manpower last year.

Lord Young of Grafton, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, has appointed inspectors under section 432 of the Companies Act which covers suspected fraud, misconduct, or withholding of information from shareholders. Witnesses can be forced to give evidence to the inspectors under oath.

County NatWest immediately promised to co-operate with the inspectors, Mr Michael Crystal, QC, and Mr David Lane Spence, an accountant. The bank said the inspectors would be looking at events that its own deputy chairman, Sir Philip Wilkinson, had examined in a top-level internal inquiry this year. His report was passed to the Department of Trade and Industry.

County NatWest had advised Blue Arrow and Mr Tony Berry, its dynamic chairman, in its takeover of Man-

power and had been left holding a 9.5 per cent stake in the company after shareholders failed to buy half the new shares which were being sold to finance the deal.

In his statement yesterday Lord Young said the inspectors would look in particular at the role of County NatWest Ltd and County NatWest Securities "in the offer by Blue Arrow for the whole of the

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issued share capital of Manpower Inc in 1987 and their subsequent interests in the shares of Blue Arrow."

Mr Berry refused to comment on the inquiry last night but according to a colleague he was "surprised" at the announcement. He apparently feels the investigation concerns County NatWest, which still advises Blue Arrow, and not his company.

But the timing of the inquiry will be a big embarrassment to Blue Arrow, which has Mr Norman Tebbit, the former Conservative Party chairman, as a non-executive director. Mr Tebbit joined the company after the Manpower acquisition.

In January Mr Christopher

Castleman, the former head of Hill Samuel, the top merchant bankers, who also came in after the bid, resigned after only two months as chief executive.

Mr Berry is facing a revolt by owners of the Manpower franchises in the United States who are demanding his dismissal. The shares have slumped from their pre-crash peak of 166p to 82p.

County NatWest said last night: "The DTI announcement relates to events that took place in 1987 which were investigated earlier this year by Sir Philip Wilkinson at the request of Mr T. A. Green when Mr Green assumed executive responsibilities at NatWest Investment Bank."

"The resulting report from that internal investigation was submitted to the DTI. County NatWest will continue to co-operate fully with the inquiry."

Observers believe the decision to call in the inspectors is related to an arrangement whereby County NatWest split the Blue Arrow stake with 4.9 per cent held by its investment bank and 4.6 per cent by its market-making subsidiary, County NatWest Securities.

Unarmed PC shot dead by bank raid gang

By Craig Seton and Ronald Faux

An unarmed police constable was shot dead yesterday and another was seriously wounded as they attempted to stop two men wielding shotguns who had stolen £600 during a bank raid in Coventry, West Midlands.

The policeman who died was shot in the chest at point-blank range through the windscreen of his car after he stopped the robbers get-away vehicle. The second officer, also unarmed, was blasted in the stomach in a separate incident when he rammed the gunmen's second get-away car and, knowing they were armed, began to wrestle with one of them, even clubbing him over the head with his personal radio, before he was shot.

Later one of the bank robbers shot himself dead and the other surrendered to police marksmen after fleeing on foot across a golf course, pursued by policemen and tracked by a police helicopter which spotted them breaking into a house where they took refuge.

During a three-hour siege at the house, the men fired repeatedly and indiscriminately at police officers from the Tactical Fire Arms Unit and at the helicopter, which had been on routine patrol when it was directed to pursue the men.

Last night Mr Geoffrey Dear, the Chief Constable of the West Midlands, praised the heroism of unarmed officers who had tackled the

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desperate gunmen and said: "They showed absolute unalloyed courage of the very highest order."

After it was disclosed that the two gunmen, aged 20 and 22, from South Wales had been armed with sawn-off, 12-bore shotguns, the Chief Constable said: "This tragedy underlines the immense dangers that uniformed and plain-clothes policemen face daily in going repeatedly unarmed to face known danger and doing

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Likud and Labour agree to rule Israel in new coalition

From Richard Owen, Jerusalem

Likud and Labour, the two main parties in Israel, yesterday broke the country's political deadlock almost seven weeks after the general election and cleared the way for a broad coalition government led by Mr Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud leader and Prime Minister.

Although details of a deal have still to be worked out, Likud appears certain to gain the foreign affairs portfolio from Mr Shimon Peres, the Labour leader, who becomes Finance Minister. Mr Moshe Arens, a Likud hardliner, is tipped as his successor.

Observers said this means that, unlike the last national unity Government, in which Mr Peres and Mr Shamir were constantly at odds, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister would be "of one mind". But as one diplomat put it: "On the other hand, that mind is

not disposed toward compromise over territory."

Another difference from the arrangement during the last period of coalition rule would be that Mr Peres and Mr Shamir would not alternate as Prime Minister.

The main sticking points in Likud's lengthy on-off negotiations with Labour were

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finally settled last night. Labour is to have the same number of ministers as Likud. On the sensitive issue of new Jewish settlements on the West Bank, where Likud was pressing for a total of 40, the two sides have agreed a total of eight to be built in the first year of government.

Numbers for further settlements have been left for future negotiation.

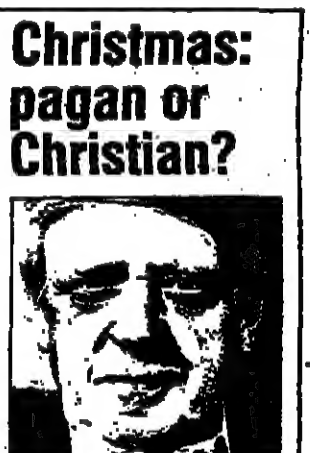
The chairmanship of the

Knesset (parliamentary) Finance Committee goes to Labour, ensuring that Mr Peres' economic plans are not frustrated by Likud. He intends to give aid to Israel's financially troubled kibbutzim and to ailing industries run by the trade union organization, Histadrut.

In the November 1 election, Likud gained 39 seats and Labour 38, meaning that neither could govern without coalition partners.

It was not clear whether the smaller right-wing religious parties would also be included. Observers said that with or without the religious parties, which gained seats and authority in the poll, the proposed Likud-Labour coalition was likely to prove incapable of formulating a clear and decisive common stand on Middle East peace policy.

Christmas: pagan or Christian?



● On Saturday Anthony Burgess (above) focuses on Christianity in a special Christmas edition of the *Sunday Times* Magazine, which will be published with *The Times*. Is the Church an integral part of the festival? Or has it always been an essentially pagan time?

● In the same issue, eminent scholars, including the Bishop of Durham and Donald Cupitt, answer the far-from-simple question: who was Jesus?

● The *Times* has many other treats in store this Christmas. To be sure of your copies over the holiday, place an order with your newsagent today.

WIN £68,000

Portfolio PLUS Accumulator

● There was one winner of yesterday's £4,000 daily prize (see page 3) so the fund remains at £68,000. Prices: page 23

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Traffic jams cut speed of 999 services by half

By David Sapsted

The average speed of ambulances attending emergencies in central London has more than halved in just over a decade because of worsening traffic congestion, it was disclosed yesterday.

A spokesman for London Ambulance Service said the delays inevitably put lives at risk. The average speed of an ambulance is now about

11 mph, compared with 25 mph in 1975.

London Fire Brigade also said it was "increasingly difficult" for fire engines to meet the government-set deadline of five minutes to respond to a call. New procedures and a new computer were being introduced to try and counter the problems of congestion.

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Christmas spenders get chilly mortgage warning

By Maria Scott

The Halifax Building Society is joining debt counsellors in warning consumers to control Christmas spending and borrowing in preparation for mortgage increases early next year.

Mr Jim Birrell, chief executive of the society, the largest in the country, is directing his advice particularly to the 1.7 million Halifax borrowers who pay their mortgages through a budget plan, where payments change just once a year.

The Halifax will decide at the end of January what the annual adjustment should be while taking account of the recent increases in the mortgage rate and the further rise likely early in the new year.

Budget plan borrowers start to pay the new rate from April.

Mr Birrell warns that the rise will be "noticeable" and borrowers should review their spending now to allow for them. They should also take care about taking on more debt.

"Health warnings" which spell out the real cost of loans - including the fact that secured loan borrowers could lose their homes if they failed to keep up payments - are to be ordered by the Government. Details, page 11

If the mortgage rate increases to 13.5 per cent in the new year, someone with a £50,000 repayment mortgage, spread over 25 years, could see the monthly repayment rise from £405.29 to £502.90. A £100,000 endowment loan would cost £1,040.63, up from £793.96.

The Halifax may allow borrowers to reschedule part of the debt, but no decision has been made about this yet.

Nationwide Anglia, the third largest building society, has already decided to offer this option to its 400,000 budget plan holders.

Borrowers can add some of the increase to the loan outstanding. Even so, borrowers will still see a marked difference in repayments.

Someone with a £30,000 endowment mortgage will see monthly payments rise from £187.98 to £241.25 in February, if they opt for the rescheduling option. Without this, the new payment would be £260.88.

Nationwide is also urging budget plan borrowers to prepare for their February shock.



THE FAMOUS GROUSE
Quality in an age of change

NEWS ROUNDUP

12 quizzed over murder and rape

Detectives investigating a trail of murder, rape and robbery across south London and Surrey by a gang of burglars were last night questioning 11 men and a woman held in raids by armed police.

The arrests were made yesterday before dawn on two addresses in Sydenham, south-east London, including a house converted into bedsits. More than 40 officers took part in the raids, including members of the Yard's PT17 specialist firearms unit.

Police from Scotland Yard and Surrey are working jointly in the hunt for a gang who last week murdered Mr Peter Hurburgh, leaving him to die in a field, stabbed a second man when they broke into his parents' home and carried out violent burglaries within a few hours across Surrey. Rewards totalling £25,000 have been put up for the capture of the gang, who are thought to have used the M25 to circle London and reach their targets using stolen cars.

Electricians' setback

The electricians' union yesterday suffered its first serious setback since its expulsion from the TUC. Its London Press branch announced that its members had voted overwhelmingly in favour of joining the print union, Sogat. More than 70 per cent of the 1,500 branch members who took part in the ballot voted to leave the Electrical, Electronic, Telecommunication and Plumbing Union, defying their general secretary, Mr Eric Hammond. The decision was largely influenced by Sogat's promise to form a new national branch for the newspaper industry.

Man on gun charge

Michael McAffrey, aged 24, who is accused of taking a hostage before robbing the streets of Covent Garden, central London, with a handgun appeared at Bow Street Magistrates' Court yesterday. He was charged with abduction in Trafalgar Square on December 1. He is also accused of unlawful imprisonment and possession of a firearm on the same date. He was remanded in custody until December 28.

Launch day for Ark

A new environmental pressure group, called Ark, which aims to halt the destruction of the natural world through popular pressure, was launched yesterday. Mr Bryn Jones, a former director of Greenpeace, chairman of the group, said he had formed it because Greenpeace was not democratic enough. Ark will set up local groups which match constituency boundaries in Britain, but it also hopes to attract support in Europe, Canada and Russia. It hopes to have 100,000 members by the end of next year.

Talks on saving Post

Talks were continuing last night in Warrington, Cheshire, aimed at saving *The Post*, which ceased publication at the weekend. Executives from Celebrity Group Holdings flew there to talk to Mr Eddy Shah and Mr Lloyd Turner, respectively publisher and editor of the newspaper. The appointment of a court administrator to handle redundancy payments has been delayed pending the outcome of negotiations. Apart from ending his backing for *The Post*, Mr Shah is also selling his Messenger group of newspapers for £25 million to Reed International.

Unleaded fuel boost

Vauxhall is to be the first large British manufacturer to switch production of all its cars to run on unleaded petrol. Mr Peter Bachelor, Vauxhall's marketing director, announced yesterday that from January 1, all Astra and Cavalier models built in Britain will be adjusted to run on both unleaded and normal four star petrol.

Kinnoek urges Army families to defy IRA bomb attacks

Mr Neil Kinnoek told soldiers' families in Northern Ireland yesterday that they should not be withdrawn as repairs began on more than 100 homes damaged by the latest bomb aimed at Army wives and children.

The Labour leader's one-day visit was arranged before Sunday night's explosion on the Nelson Drive estate at Londonderry where Army families live alongside civilians.

The police are trying to trace the

owner of a yellow Datsun Cherry car which contained a large bomb and was left outside a terrace of houses owned by the Ministry of Defence and occupied by Army families.

Most of the houses badly damaged were owned and occupied by civilians. Only two people needed treatment after the blast - a woman with leg wounds and her mentally handicapped son, aged 12, who was severely shocked. The estate had largely been

evacuated when the bomb exploded only 15 minutes after a 20-minute warning had been telephoned.

It was the third time in six weeks that a large car-bomb had exploded on an estate containing married quarters and it came after a warning by the IRA last week that regular soldiers' families had seven days to leave.

Mr Kinnoek said in Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, where he met bereaved and injured survivors of last year's

Remembrance Day bombing: "No concession must be made to terrorism and the withdrawal of families would be just that".

Eleven people, including five members of one family from Randalstown, Co Antrim, appeared at Belfast Magistrates' Court yesterday charged with an earlier attempted bombing of a party Army-occupied housing estate at Antrim last week, which was foiled by the security forces.

Life or death poser as ambulances crawl at 11mph in traffic

By David Sapeed

Worsening traffic congestion means that ambulances in central London are taking up to twice as long to reach emergency calls as they were 13 years ago, it was disclosed yesterday.

London Ambulance Service said that, since 1975, the average speed of its vehicles in the heart of London had fallen from 25 mph to little more than 11 mph.

Ambulances are encountering such severe problems in jams that the service has had to accept that one in 10 of its vehicles will not reach an emergency until at least 15 minutes after a 999 call.

"We have no idea what this means in terms of loss of life but, if you think that the brain starts to die after three minutes of being starved of oxygen, you can imagine how important lost minutes can be when it comes to such situations as a fire involving toxic fumes", the ambulance service said.

Both the Home Office and the Department of Transport said yesterday they were "constantly in touch" over the effects on the emergency services of increasing traffic on London roads, which has grown by 22 per cent during peak hours and by 37 per cent during the rest of the day since 1975. London Fire Brigade

also disclosed that it had been forced to adopt new procedures in an attempt to meet the five-minute response time set by the Government.

The brigade admitted that it was "increasingly difficult" for appliances to meet the deadline in spite of measures aimed at speeding the dispatch of fire engines and, on all occasions involving an incident within the central area, sending assistance from two different stations in the hope that one can get there within five minutes.

On the night of the King's Cross Tube tragedy last year, an appliance from the Soho station succeeded in getting to the scene within the five minutes.

Another sent from Clerkenwell, the nearer station, took 14 minutes to travel 1,422 yards because of "average" traffic congestion - a speed of 7 mph.

London Fire Brigade headquarters is shortly to get a computer to control response times and is also getting faster vehicles so that, when the road is clear, delays will be kept to a minimum.

Among the emergency services, only the police seem to have escaped the worst of the problems. "Of course, congestion can cause delays but it is something we have been com-

ing to terms with over a number of years". Chief Supt Peter Wrigglesworth, of the Metropolitan Police's traffic branch, said.

"Generally, the public respond very well to an emergency and there are very few incidents of our progress being seriously impeded by jams."

However, Sir Peter Imbert, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, has expressed fears over the worsening snarl-ups in central London.

He has suggested that it may be necessary eventually to introduce permits for car-drivers entering the capital.

Christmas shopping this week makes the West End virtually a no-go area for emergency vehicles.

Greenwich Borough Council yesterday launched a High Court challenge to the Government's plans for a road bridge across the Thames.

It claims the Government has acted unfairly and unlawfully by deciding to look again at the design of the bridge.

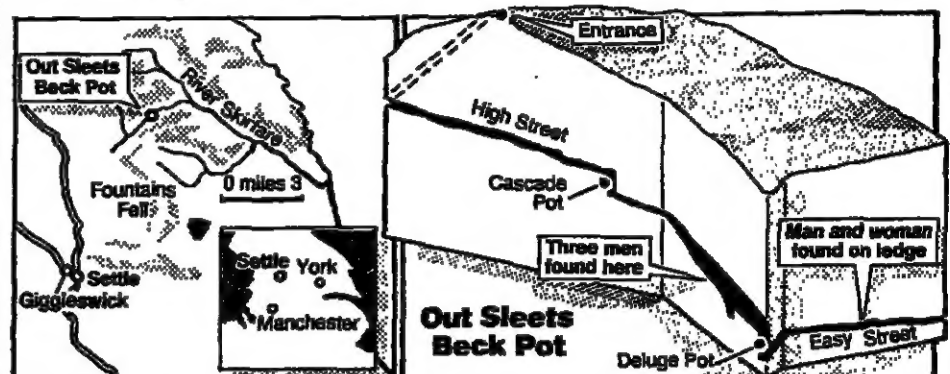
The East London River Crossing, expected to open in the mid-1990s, will form part of London's North Circular Road.

The bridge route runs into Greenwich and the council was among the objectors. The hearing, expected to last two days, continues.

Five potholers are rescued



Rescuers bring one of the potholers, who had been trapped by flood waters, to safety



By Peter Davenport

One by one, five potholers trapped in an underground carving system by rapidly rising flood waters, were helped to safety through a tiny hole in the bank of a moorland stream yesterday.

Almost 24 hours after they first went underground, the four men and one woman, were brought to the surface in a complex rescue operation that lasted throughout the night 200 ft below the Yorkshire Dales.

The five friends, all from Sheffield, had gone down Out Slets Beck Pot, near Pen-y-ghent, north of Settle, at lunchtime on Sunday.

The pot carries a flood warning and there was a forecast for heavy rain later in the day.

The group had reached the end of the system, a distance of about 3,000 ft from the entry point in the bank of the beck, and were on their way back when heavy flood waters

began to pour into the passageways.

Two of the party, including the only girl, Michelle Riley, aged 22, became tired battling against the force of the rising waters and scrambled onto a rocky ledge in a 10ft high passageway known as Easy Street near a 35 ft drop called Deluge Pot.

The three other members of the party decided to carry on but they too found the effort too much and also rested on a ledge near Cascade Pot.

The pot-holers had told relatives that they had intended to be home by early evening. When they failed to arrive the police were alerted and members of the Upper Wharfedale Fell Rescue Organisation were called out.

Mr Harry Long, the leader of the organization and the man who discovered and then chartered the pot in 1966, said that the fire brigade had to mount a pumping operation to divert the torrent of flood

waters before rescuers could enter the system.

The first three missing potholers were found, 1,000 ft along the system and 150 ft down, at eight o'clock yesterday morning. Three hours later Michelle and her companion were located. They were all unhurt.

The underground rescue operation was led by Mr Ian Watson who spent almost eight hours underground.

Rescuers said the caverns had taken the correct action. They had sheltered away from cold draughts and waited either for rescue or the waters to subside.

Yesterday police named the other four cavers as Sean O'Brien, aged 25, David Pendlebury, aged 29, Martin Whittaker, aged 38, and David Crowther, aged 37.

All five cavers are members of the Cattle Mountaineering Club in Sheffield. They went into the system well equipped.

Stopping the gunmen

Killing brings a call to arms

By Stewart Tessler and Richard Ford

The Coventry shooting yesterday will raise fresh debate about arming the police and bring to question yet again the availability of shotguns.

Twice in less than a week officers have been wounded or killed by armed criminals intent on robbery. Last week two London detectives were injured in a gun battle with a gang trying to rob a post office. Three of the gang were wounded.

The officer killed yesterday was the nineteenth to die from criminal actions in this decade according to figures from the Home Office, including the death of Detective Constable John Fordham, stabbed to death by Kenneth Noye in January 1985, the total is 20.

Yesterday's killing is the second this year. In April an off-duty constable died at Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, after intervening in a bank robbery.

Three forces, Nottinghamshire, Hampshire and West Yorkshire, maintain a small number of officers who patrol with weapons available in their cars. All forces have

reorganized their firearms capability, often reducing the number of trained marksmen but creating dedicated units on 24-hour call.

Some firearms experts suggest the police should be armed and argue such a decision would not bring a rash of accidents or increase the chance of gun battles.

Mr Alan Eastwood, chairman of the Police Federation, said yesterday's killing was "the criminal's response to the Government's crackdown on firearms. They have given their salute, a one-finger salute."

He said the federation had called for greater controls on shotguns. Violent criminals needed a deterrent, one they would fear. That deterrent was the death penalty.

Mr Eastwood added: "If nothing is done and no deterrent is forthcoming from Parliament, we will have to be armed."

Conservative MPs endorsed his demands for the restoration of capital punishment. A House of Commons motion was tabled calling on Mr Douglas Hurd, Home

Secretary, to consider reintroducing the death penalty.

Mr Hugo Summerson, Conservative MP for Walthamstow, tabled the motion saying that "in the light of this tragic incident" the Home Secretary should consider reintroduction of the death penalty for the murder of police officers on duty and some other categories of victims.

Mr Summerson said: "One great advantage of the death penalty is that these sort of murderers never get the opportunity to do it again."

Last June MPs voted by a majority of 123 votes against a proposal to restore the death penalty for murder.

Mr Gerald Bowden, the Conservative MP for Dulwich, who once opposed the return of the death penalty, said last night: "I am now convinced that the reintroduction of capital punishment is the only way to stop robbers taking guns with them on crimes like this."

Mr Tony Marlow, Conservative MP for Northampton North, added: "The death penalty would have been a deterrent."

Forensic science in crisis

By Martin Fletcher

Political Reporter

Serious shortcomings in the Forensic Science Service were admitted last night by the Home Office. Pressures were such that the service "has not been able in recent years to respond to the demands of the police and the courts as readily as it would like", it said in evidence to the all-party home affairs committee.

There had been "delays in dealing with less important cases and restrictions on the kind of cases which laboratories are prepared to examine".

Mr Douglas Hurd, Home Secretary, has said 23 additional scientific staff would be recruited within two years. But in a written memorandum the Home Office conceded that the service would "still need to concentrate its efforts on those cases where it can contribute most". The admissions came on the last day of the committee's inquiry on the service. Mr John Wheeler, the committee's Conservative chairman, said the state of the service appeared "desperate".

Judge rules out boats on stretch of Derwent

By Andrew Morgan

Conservationists last night celebrated a High Court judgement that boats have no navigation rights or access under the Rights of Way Act on a 15-mile stretch of the Derwent, North Yorkshire, which has been described as one of the last unspoiled rivers of England.

The verdict was a setback to the 18-year campaign by the Yorkshire Derwent Trust which, with Malton Town Council, had brought the action through the Attorney General to try to allow greater public access to the river between Sutton upon Derwent and Malton.

The action was defended by 10 riparian owners and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust which argued that pleasure craft would ruin a river which has many rights of scientific interest.

Last night, Mr Ian Cairns, spokes-

man for the River Derwent appeal, said the interpretation of the 1932 Rights of Way Act would have big implications for other rivers. "Thousands of nature conservationists, anglers and riverside owners will be relieved", he said.

The defendants were awarded costs in excess of £100,000. The Yorkshire Derwent Trust has spent a similar amount, with much donated by the Inland Waterways Association.

The issues turned on whether navigation rights were ended when an order under the 1935 Lands Drainage Act revoked the 1702 Derwent Navigation Act, passed so a towpath and locks could be built on the upper Derwent.

The plaintiffs had claimed that there was a navigational right before 1702 from time immemorial but Mr Justice Vinelott said there was insufficient evidence to

prove the point. He cited the Charter of York which referred to Sutton upon Derwent as being the head of navigation before 1702 when the Acts of Parliament were passed to "facilitate navigation".

The judge, who took nearly three hours to read his judgement, also accepted the conservationists' evidence that ancient mill dams in the river would have been an obstruction to navigation before work was carried out to build the locks. The judge also found that, after the 1702 Act, owners of riparian land had not "dedicated" the riverbed to the public.

Mr Justice Vinelott, who at one point was interpreting charters in medieval Latin, rejected the plaintiffs' plea that the 1932 Rights of Way Act applied to water in the way it does on land.

The Yorkshire Derwent Trust said it was considering an appeal.

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TV soap

Head quit governors with blind

Companies to

Depute over B reporters' bun

deal with Wa

TV soap operas help children learn, psychologist says

By Thomson Prentice
Science Correspondent

Children learn more from television than their parents and teachers believe, and watching soap operas helps them discover how adults behave, researchers said yesterday.

A study of those aged six and seven showed that they were surprisingly good at absorbing information on subjects as complex as photosynthesis and the laws of gravity in programmes geared for young audiences.

The research by Dr Maire Messenger Davies, a psychologist, was commissioned by BBC Television's children's department and will help shape the content of future programmes.

She told a conference organized in London by the British Psychological Society: "The study shows

that quite young children learn a lot from television and we should not underestimate their abilities. They grow up with television and it becomes their friend. More programmes specifically aimed at youngsters will help their education."

Dr Messenger Davies acknowledged that children could be adversely affected by violent or unpleasant programmes. "Absorbing what they see is not the same as imitating it. We have to remain vigilant about what children are exposed to on television but we should not assume that it is mostly a negative influence."

Dr Helen Petrie, lecturer in psychology at Sussex University, said that children learn much about adult behaviour from watching soap operas such as *Brookside*, *Coronation Street* and

A study of trainee London taxi drivers shows that the job attracts more extrovert personalities than the average in the population, (Pearce Wright, writes). But an investigation into what makes a "Knowledge Boy", as a black-cab trainee is known, also adds new insight into the effects of the stress of driving a London taxi. The research by Dr Ben Fletcher and

Mr David Morris, from Hatfield Polytechnic, Hertfordshire, proves an earlier observation about the high incidence of stress-related illnesses among experienced taxi drivers. Trainees need an intimate knowledge of London and the qualifying test has a high failure rate. The scientists compared the psychological profile of the "Knowledge Boys" with those of

EastEnders. She conducted a study of the three serials which showed that female characters tend to be less assertive and powerful than males in the way they speak, reflecting similar "real life" research.

● Mass media campaigns on Aids

have failed to influence sexual and drug-abusing behaviour, and alternative strategies need to be developed by the Government and health educators. Ms Lorraine Sherr, clinical psychologist at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, west London, said at the conference.

"The public has been told for three years that doomsday is coming but it has not arrived and the warnings are losing credibility," she said. "But Aids is a huge and growing problem and instead of frightening people out of their wits we have to find other ways of informing and advising them."

Millions spent on advertising campaigns would be better spent on direct face-to-face advice to groups at risk, or on clinical research, she said.

● Research into an outbreak of

post viral fatigue syndrome at a Glasgow polytechnic has shown that the condition, sometimes called "yuppie flu" can affect people of all ages and backgrounds, with serious consequences.

Dr Alan Durnell studied 27 cases of the puzzling illness at Glasgow College. Although almost half of the sufferers had been jogging or taking part in other strenuous exercise before becoming ill, such activities could not fully explain their vulnerability, he said.

He told the conference that the illness was often precipitated by influenza-like symptoms, was unpredictable and recurrent, and nothing seemed to help, apart from rest.

● The texture of food, rather than its chemical composition, could be used to help fat people lose

weight, according to research by Dr David Baker, of Birmingham University (Pearce Wright writes). The conclusion comes from an investigation of claims that the drug fenfluramine is an effective anti-obesity treatment.

It is said to suppress the desire for high-calorie carbohydrate foodstuffs.

Describing laboratory research Dr Baker said the drug produced a reaction on one of the brain chemicals known as serotonin. However, its impact was to alter the preference in the structure and texture of food, rather than in choosing between carbohydrate and protein preparations.

Research animals were fed with food preparations of various crumb sizes. The results showed that the choice was dictated by the size of the crumbs and texture of the food.

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Research into an outbreak of

Head quits as governors side with blind boy

By Douglas Broom, Education Reporter

A headmaster with 39 years' teaching experience, who resigns tomorrow over the refusal of governors to support his decision not to admit a blind boy, is warning fellow heads that they could be at risk.

Mr Alan Beveridge forecasts an increase in conflicts between heads and governing bodies because of government moves to increase the powers of governors.

Mr Beveridge, aged 61, who has been head of Summercroft Junior School, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, since its foundation 24 years ago, steps down tomorrow at the end of an emotional six-month fight with the governors over the admission of Alex James.

He declined to take the boy, aged seven, because Hertfordshire County Council refused his request for an extra teacher, qualified in teaching the blind.

The boy joined the school last September and studies alongside his classmates, helped by a non-teaching assistant who reads braille. A qualified teacher of the blind visits the school once a week.

Mr Beveridge, whose resignation will cost him £3,000 a year in lost pension, said last night: "None of my teachers had any experience of teaching blind children, or any experi-

ence of blind children and their needs. I feel very hurt that the governors were not prepared to support an educational decision reached unanimously by the staff.

"I have only sought to get the best education for the boy concerned and for the other 29 children in his class."

He added: "I think we are going to see a great deal of this kind of thing as more emphasis is put on the power of governors to ignore the professional advice of heads."

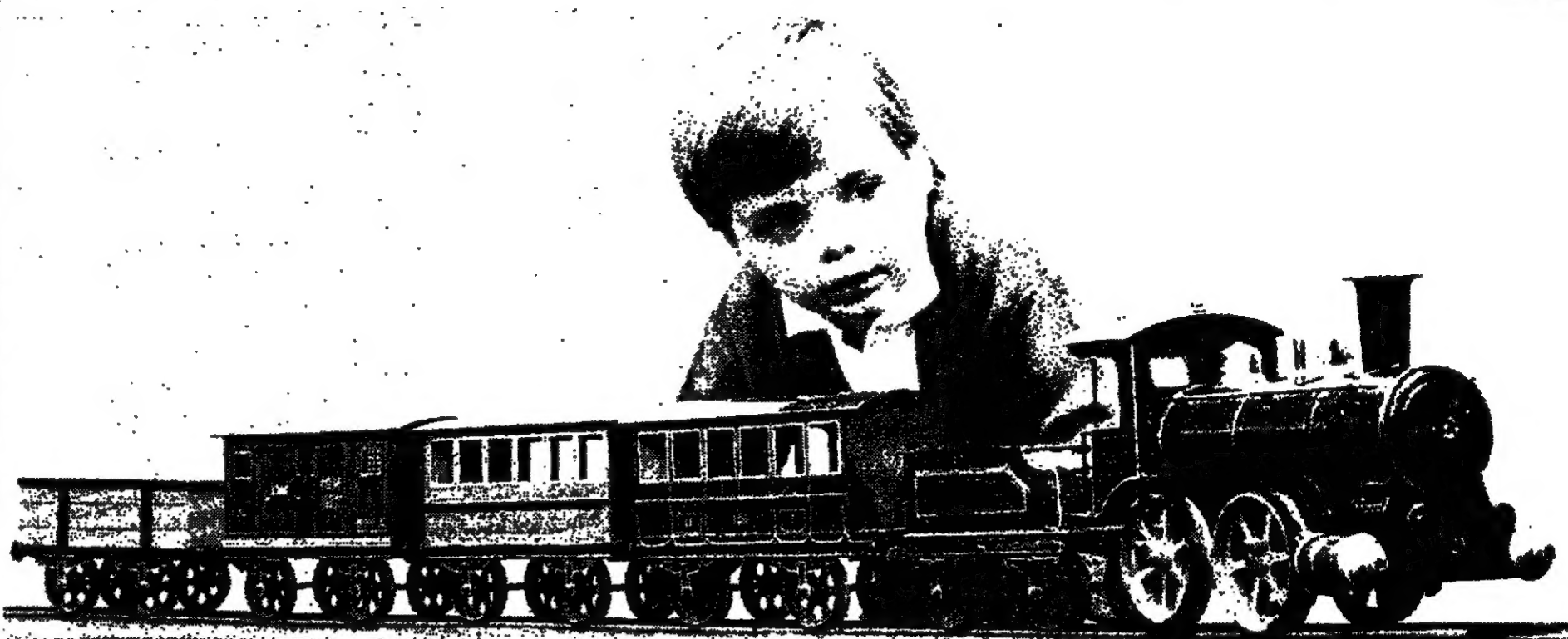
His stand was supported by almost half of the parents of the 250 pupils at the school. But they were over-ruled by the county council which endorsed the governors' decision to admit the boy and accept Mr Beveridge's resignation.

Hertfordshire County Council said last night: "We feel that we have made perfectly adequate provision to meet Alex's needs. Through-out this whole affair the interests of Alex have been our prime concern."

Dr John Milne, a consultant cardiologist who led the group of parents which supported Mr Beveridge, said: "It is a tragedy. This is a very good school which upholds traditional values. I think his treatment has been very shabby."

£19,800 for clockwork train set found in attic

HARRY KERR



Giacomo Rossi, aged three, from South Kensington, gazes at every boy's dream toy — the hand-painted train set which was the highlight of Sotheby's small gauge railway sale yesterday.

A rare hand-painted clockwork train set, discovered in an attic still in its original box and straw packing, sold for £19,800 at Christie's, South Kensington, west London, yesterday.

The news will no doubt cause regret among all grown-ups who threw out or gave away such assets when they departed childhood.

The gauge III train set, manufactured by Märklin, the German tinplate toy makers, comprising an

SALE ROOM

by Sarah Jane Checkland
Art Market
Correspondent

0-4-0 locomotive and tender, various coaches, a circle of track and tiny passengers, was estimated at £12,000 to £18,000. It dates from the turn of the century and had belonged to the anonymous vendor's grand-

father. It was bought by Mr John Hockley, a collector.

The set was the highlight in "Trains Galore" a pre-Christmas sale which drew collectors — mainly men — from all over the country, and achieved a total of £164,758, with only 8 per cent unsold.

Other high prices included £5,500 (five times estimate) for an electric Great Western Railway train complete with interior seating, tool boxes and GWR livery. This was

also bought by a private collector.

A model of an LNER locomotive, "Mallard", sold for £3,300 (upper estimate £2,200), while a "Central-Bahn" early Märklin railway station complete with ticket office and waiting room sold just above its upper estimate for £2,560.

Other good prices included £3,850 (on its upper estimate) for a rare and well-preserved Märklin "Planet" locomotive and tender dated 1935. It included a stage-type coach, a

driver and six rows of passengers sitting stiffly back to back. All the men wear bowler hats, and two of the ladies carry open parasols. It was bought anonymously.

Railway stations also performed well. A "Central-Bahn" example, also by Märklin around 1901, its attributes including stained glass windows, an onion dome clock tower, and fittings for power, fetched £2,860 (estimate up to £2,500).

Saleroom results, page 12

Consumer credit changes

Companies to state real cost of loans

By Sheila Gunn, Political Staff

The Department of Trade and Industry intends to order loan companies to print warnings on their documents pointing out the burden of repayment.

The wording is expected to be short with emphasis on telling those taking out secured loans that they stand to lose their homes if they fail to keep up repayments.

The initiative is part of a package of changes to consumer credit laws to be made either through regulations laid before Parliament early next year or in a Bill being drafted by the department, expected to be announced in the next Queen's Speech.

DTI sources emphasized that the changes are not intended to limit consumers'

ability to borrow money or to impose credit controls. But there is recognition that more needs to be done to impress on people, particularly the poorest who have run up debts, about the burden of repaying loans.

Although Mr Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer, insists that interest rates remain the most effective weapon for controlling credit, ministers at the department recognize there are loopholes in present laws, namely the Consumer Credit Act 1974.

The Director General of Fair Trading is to be given stronger powers to crack down on lenders charging extortionate rates of interest. Lenders will have to apply to him to

renew their licences every three years instead of 15. Borrowers may not be aware of loan arrangement fees until they receive their loan with the fee deducted. The department intends to require lenders to include in advertisements the fees charged.

The 1974 Act allows a debtor to ask a court to reopen a credit agreement if the charges are extortionate. The department wants to allow a court to set its own repayment arrangements if it considers the charges are extortionate.

The change is designed to help debtors who know little or nothing of their rights when in trouble. The present exemption from licensing for

firms lending less than £30 is also expected to be removed. Credit and charge card companies are confident that more than £2,000 million will be spent on credit this Christmas, and the Office of Fair Trading and the BBC have announced that they are to collaborate on an advice service starting in mid-January, aimed particularly at bringing help to those aged between 16 and 25 who have run themselves into unmanageable debt (Robin Young writes).

Barclaycard said yesterday that spending by its nine million cardholders was 35 per cent up on last year. Access predicted that its 12.5 million card carriers would spend 20 per cent more.

Soldier's bomb 'made boy a human fireball'

The life of a boy aged four was "totally ruined" when he was turned into a human fireball by a soldier's home-made bomb, the Central Criminal Court, London, was told yesterday.

The bomb, made by James Cobb, aged 19, with materials stolen from the Army, exploded in Michael Walsh's hand when he found it near his home in Putney, south-west London, Mr John Bevan, for the prosecution, said.

Michael was covered in a scorching substance which burnt the skin on his head and chest. He was saved by doctors at Roehampton Hospital, Mr Bevan said.

A consultant plastic surgeon said: "Michael sustained terrible burns. He is left with permanent mutilating scarring

and will need a great deal of reconstructive surgery."

Mr Cobb denies using explosives with intent to cause grievous bodily harm and causing bodily harm by explosives.

Mr Bevan said Mr Cobb had made the bomb with materials he had stolen as a soldier with A Company, the Second Battalion, Royal Green Jackets.

Neighbours heard an explosion and saw Michael's brother running, followed by a ball of fire. They smothered the flames and Michael was rushed to hospital.

Mr Bevan said Mr Cobb had admitted making the bomb, but there was no suggestion he meant to hurt Michael.

The case continues.

Victims get £38,000 over water pollution

By Ruth Gledhill

South West Water has paid out £38,000 to 140 people affected by the Camelford water pollution incident.

Payments ranged from £1.80 for bottles of mineral water to nearly £11,000 for exotic fish poisoned by the 20 tonnes of aluminium sulphate dumped into a wrong tank at the Lowermoor treatment works near Camelford, north Cornwall. More than £20,000 has been paid in compensation for sickness alone.

New figures, based on water samples taken at the time of the incident in July, showed that the aluminium level in the water supply rose in places to 3,000 times the EEC limit. Theoretical calculations, based on the worst possible scenario, suggested that in

some of the 7,000 properties affected, the level could have risen to 6,000 times the limit.

Mr Walter Roberts, of the Lowermoor incident liaison group, is meeting ministers from the departments of the environment and health tomorrow to ask for an assessment of the effects.

Portfolio PLUS Accumulator

The sole winner of yesterday's daily £4,000 Portfolio prize was Mr William Findlay, a retired chartered accountant from Enfield, north London.

Dispute over BBC reporters' 'bunker'

By Richard Evans, Media Editor

The BBC may face another investigation by the Health and Safety Executive because it has transferred its leading radio news correspondents to a "dangerous and unhealthy bunker".

A senior corporation editor, Jenny Abramsky, editor of BBC radio news and current affairs, has formally admitted to the Institute of Journalists that the move of the 10 senior specialists "was not properly executed" and that the temporary accommodation was "far from ideal".

The correspondents were moved last month from their normal offices on the third floor of Broadcasting House to enable building work to begin on new offices. It should be completed next April at a cost

of several hundred thousand pounds.

Meanwhile, the correspondents are in a cramped, windowless studio, with many of their reference books locked away because of insufficient space. Studio 3A, reserved for emergencies, such as general elections, had no telephones or proper desks when they moved in.

After a formal complaint the Institute of Journalists is threatening to ask the Health and Safety Executive to investigate.

The BBC already faces prosecution after an HSE investigation into the outbreak of Legionnaires' disease earlier this year in a water cooling tower at Broadcasting House, which resulted in three deaths.

Sky deal with Warner

By Our Media Editor

Sky Movies, one of six satellite television channels being launched by Mr Rupert Murdoch early next year, has signed an important deal with Warner Brothers, it was disclosed yesterday.

The agreement provides for a five-year exclusive output deal on all future films and access to Warner's library.

Mr Andrew Neil, executive chairman of Sky Television, said yesterday: "We are particularly excited with this

deal. Warner has a wonderful reputation for distributing films that work extremely well in the UK market place.

"With Twentieth Century Fox, Touchstone, and now Warner, we have concluded agreements with three of Hollywood's most successful studios in 1988."

Sky Movies has also signed a pay television licence deal covering releases by Orion Pictures Corporation, including *Platoon*, *Robocop*, *No Way Out*, *Mississippi Burning* and *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*.

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Loss of homes fear grows as recession hits housing market

By Christopher Warman, Property Correspondent

The latest house price survey by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors shows a deep recession in the housing market.

The survey, published today, reports growing fears of an increase in mortgage arrears and repossession because of high interest rates.

The report also shows that house prices are falling in some parts of London and the South-east.

Nationally, 17 per cent of the agents in the survey reported a fall in asking prices, twice as many as in the previous quarter. The North continues to be more buoyant than the rest of the country, but activity is reduced.

Mr Bob Miller, of the east London agents, Randall's, described the market as being in deep recession after a long period of boom.

"Interest rates at the current high level will dampen demand still further and cause considerable hardship to existing borrowers, especially first-time purchasers with large repayment commitments who may struggle to stay afloat. We anticipate increased arrears cases and repossessions."

This gloomy view was rejected by the Halifax, Britain's largest building society, which said that 70 per cent of its borrowers (and 40 per cent of all building society borrowers) were on a budget plan, and would not face increased payments until next April. "The last time interest rates went high, to 15 per cent, our borrowers coped very well, and the situation is better because rates are not expected to go that high, the rate of earnings is higher and unemployment less."

The institution survey

shows that in London only serious buyers and sellers are on the scene. The agents, Brendons, report that in Ealing, west London, there has been a decrease in prices of 5-8 per cent except for small semi-detached houses which are holding their price.

In Islington, north London, Mr Conrad Mizen, of Coping Jones, reports that chains are building up as people look for a bargain before putting their own property on the market. As a result buyers are having to drop the price of their property.

From Tunbridge Wells in Kent, Mr Alan Chart, of the agents, Alan de Maid, reports that asking prices are continuing to fall, more than 10 per cent at times.

"With a stable lower level of asking prices, sales can be achieved. Perhaps it will soon be appreciated that summer 1988 prices cannot be obtained at the same time as a person can buy 'cheap' due to the setbacks."

Overall, of the 187 agents in England and Wales contributing to the institution survey, the number reporting increases of 8 per cent in the quarter to the end of November fell to 4 per cent, compared with 11 per cent last quarter, and only 12 per cent reported increases of 5 per cent. For nearly half, prices remained static, and the number of agents reporting a fall in prices doubled to 17 per cent.

Mr Peter Miller, the institution's housing market spokesman, said that as the housing market adjusted to a changing climate, stocks of available property and choices were increasing. "Providing that people moving buy and sell in the same market they will

secure value for money at both ends of the transaction."

A group of 19 London estate agents has taken the unusual step of issuing a joint statement to "rebut the continuing impression that prices are being slashed and the market is collapsing". They say that prices are not being "slashed". "Some over-optimistic sellers are having to adjust their asking prices, but that process is normal, particularly at this time of year."

Council tenants' debts have increased greatly because of housing benefit cuts, made under the Government's social security reforms, the Association of Metropolitan Authorities said yesterday (David Walker writes).

An association survey of 28 city councils shows an increase of more than one third in rent arrears between April, when the reforms were introduced, and the end of September. Not all the councils showing large increases are Labour. They include Havering, the Conservative-controlled east London borough, and Calderdale, the district around Halifax where Liberal and Conservative councillors outnumber Labour.

In Calderdale arrears have almost doubled. Arrears have increased by nearly two thirds in Labour-controlled Bury in Greater Manchester and Knowsley in Merseyside. There have been large increases, too, in such London Labour boroughs as Brent and Hackney.

The figures for rent arrears are causing concern in the Department of Environment which wants to restructure council housing finance so that rents will rise considerably over the next few years.

Musical takes £2m in advance booking

JAMES MORGAN



Andrew Lloyd Webber (left) with Michael Ball yesterday after he had picked him to play the male leading role in the new musical, *Aspects of Love*.

Advance bookings for Andrew Lloyd Webber's next musical, *Aspects of Love*, are already double those for *Phantom of the Opera* on its first night (Ruth Gledhill writes). Four months before the musical, starring Michael Ball, opens at the Prince of Wales Theatre in London, the theatre has taken more than £2 million, leaving it

practically fully booked for the first three months of its run. The public bought £130,000 of tickets on the first day they were available. The musical is likely to star mostly unknown actors and actresses, chosen after casting sessions on both sides of the Atlantic. Mr Lloyd Webber yesterday announced that Mr Ball, aged 26, will

play Alexis, a young English boy who has an affair with a penniless French actress, Rose. Mr Ball, a graduate of drama college in Guildford, played Raoul in *Phantom* and Marius in *Les Misérables* and has been acting for four years. He has just recorded the first single from the musical, "Love Changes Everything", which will be

released next month and is likely to send box office receipts even higher. The name of the actress who will play Rose is yet to be announced. "It is an extremely complicated plot," Mr Lloyd Webber said. Mr Ball added: "People will leave the show feeling they have been let into these people's lives."

Maths and science teaching

Baker wins on pencil and paper work

By David Tytler and Douglas Brown

The national curriculum came a step closer yesterday when Mr Kenneth Baker published his draft proposals for lessons in mathematics and science to be introduced into schools in England and Wales.

The Secretary of State for Education and Science had been unhappy with the reliance placed on calculators in mathematics lessons and was concerned that a science course taking up 20 per cent of the national curriculum would be impractical for many children.

In a parliamentary written answer, Mr Baker accepted the revised proposals from the National Curriculum Council which met his demands for more pencil and paper work in mathematics and an alternative short course in science.

Children will now be taught to do long division and multiplication using two or three digit numbers and not simply rely on calculators, although

they will be encouraged to use them. The most controversial change in the original council plans published in August was for the introduction of a short course of science of 12.5 per cent of national curriculum time to run in parallel with the original 20 per cent course. Mr Baker said yesterday that he hoped all schools would offer the long science course.

In submitting their final proposals for mathematics and science earlier this month, the curriculum council told Mr Baker that it still hoped

that most pupils would be encouraged to take the longer course.

Mr Duncan Graham, the council's chief executive, said last night: "I am particularly pleased that he has accepted and echoed our view that the majority of pupils should be offered the long science course."

The department is asking for objections or comments by February 3.

Mr Baker yesterday also acted to reassure parents over fears that tests for children aged seven under the new

curriculum would be too easy.

His intervention came after the disclosure of proposals to replace traditional spelling, reading and mathematics tests with exercise in finger counting and making noises.

A storm of protest erupted at the weekend after parts of a submission prepared by one of the educational groups which won contracts to develop tests for the new curriculum were leaked to the press.

The proposals from the National Foundation for Educational Research, which was awarded a £1.6 million government contract to develop tests last Friday, include setting children tasks such as measuring objects in handspans, counting their fingers and making noises with rulers.

Mr Baker issued a statement yesterday in which he emphasized that the foundation's document did not represent the final form in which tests would be administered to pupils.

Warning on bogus policemen

Police issued a warning yesterday to drivers in Berkshire and north Hampshire to be on guard for bogus policemen.

The warning came after bogus policemen tried to book a driver for speeding, but drove off when he demanded that they go with him to the police station. It was the twelfth such incident in recent weeks.

The Thames Valley has been troubled by the fake policemen who stop motorists and demand on-the-spot fines. Police believe there is a group of tricksters who use unmarked Ford Escorts similar to patrol vehicles to follow drivers.

In one incident the bogus officers took a blood sample from a driver, starting an AIDS scare.

Children ill

Health officials yesterday launched an investigation after three children from a primary school at West Bridgford, near Nottingham, were in hospital with a potentially fatal strain of meningitis. Every child at the school is receiving antibiotics as a precaution.

Fans cleared

Twelve Swindon Town football supporters were cleared of manslaughter yesterday at Winchester Crown Court, after the judge said the prosecution had failed to prove that any of them had delivered the kick or blow which killed a Plymouth supporter in November last year.

Cancer's toll

Cancer caused 141,000 deaths in England and Wales in 1986, but the most common killers were circulatory illness, such as strokes and heart diseases, which led to 270,000 deaths, according to the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. The total number of deaths was 581,000.

Kidnap charge

A bricklayer was remanded in custody yesterday accused of kidnapping a policeman and a taxi driver. Mr Jeffrey Smith, aged 38, of Paddock Wood, Kent, was also charged with unlawful possession of a shotgun and causing grievous bodily harm to a public house landlord.

Caring couple

Neighbours who have cared for a road crash victim for four years turned down the offer of a £7,000 share in his £160,000 damages award, the High Court was told yesterday. Mr Bill Hurrell and his wife Jill said Mr Stanley Clarke, of Wetherden, Stowmarket, Suffolk, who suffered brain damage, needed the money more.

Brothers jailed

Paul Fry, aged 19, and his brother David, aged 23, of Wordsworth Avenue, Pottisgrove, Portsmouth, Hampshire, were jailed for six months at Portsmouth Magistrates' Court yesterday for organizing dog fights.

Prosecution staff to increase

By Frances Gibb, Legal Affairs Correspondent

The Crown Prosecution Service has secured extra cash from the Treasury for a substantial increase in staff, boosting present numbers by at least 700.

The increase applies from next April. It is expected to raise the total staffing complement from 4,786 by at least 15 per cent.

The details come at a time when the service is struggling to cope with an increasing number of cases. Last year an extra 7,000 cases came before the crown courts, bringing the total to more than 100,000.

Mr Allan Green, QC, the Director of Public Prosecutions, has made clear that

recruitment is his top priority. A service spokesman said yesterday that the approval for an increase in staffing would greatly help the service to do its job properly.

He said he accepted the service had not yet filled its complement of staff in all areas. But this coming year a package of recruitment measures is expected to be initiated under the service's newly-appointed recruitment manager, Miss Fiona King.

The staffing increase has been agreed as part of an annual review of the needs of the service. At present there is provision for 1,788 lawyers of which 1,381 are in post, a

shortfall of nearly 23 per cent. Of the total staffing complement of 4,786, 4,056 are in post.

Miss Robyn Dasey, assistant secretary general of the First Division Association, which represents service lawyers, yesterday welcomed the approval for extra staffing. But she said that she hoped the service was now effective in securing new recruits.

"In some areas of the service the numbers of support staff needed has been very badly underestimated. And even where the numbers of lawyers are almost up to strength, there is the problem of the increased caseload."

Science park plan unveiled

By Our Property Correspondent

Plans for a £520 million science research park at Emersons Green, east of Bristol, were unveiled yesterday by a consortium including the universities of Bristol and Bath, and Bristol Polytechnic. It is anticipated that the project will create some 14,000 jobs in the greater Bristol region. The 450-acre development will include three million square feet of space for science and information technology industries and other compatible "blue chip" employers, in a low-density, landscaped campus setting.

Also in the scheme are plans for 350 executive homes, a first-class hotel and conference centre and a wide range of leisure and other services.

An academic innovation centre at the heart of the park, to be called the Science Research Foundation, will eventually house up to 150 senior research workers and draw on the skills of the three academic institutions.

The Emersons Green Development Company, formed to create the park, yesterday submitted a planning application to Northavon District Council and Kingswood Borough Council. It is anticipated that the plans will be examined at a public inquiry next year.

BA crews on stand-by for shuttle holiday rush record

By Harvey Elliott, Air Correspondent

Nearly 400 British Airways pilots and cabin staff have been ordered to stand by to fly dozens of additional shuttle services from Heathrow to Manchester, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Belfast on Thursday and Friday as the airline prepares to break records for domestic operations.

By yesterday Mr Hamish MacBeth, BA's operations manager for the shuttle, was beginning to worry that all plans worked out since June to cope with the expected Christmas rush could go awry.

"I don't like it," he said, as the 1230 flight to Belfast took off with a few seats unfilled. "It looks as if

people are going to delay their departure right up to the last moment and that means Friday and Saturday are going to be a real scramble."

British Airways introduced the shuttle in 1975 with a guarantee that anyone who turned up at the airport and bought a ticket on the spot would get a seat - even if it meant putting on additional aircraft.

The idea has worked well so far but this year predictions are that thousands of additional passengers will turn up, especially for flights to Belfast.

"People can go by rail or road to Scotland or Manchester but they rely on the airbridge between London and Belfast if they want to be with

their families for Christmas", Mr MacBeth said.

The highest number of people flying between Heathrow and Belfast in one day was on December 23 last year, when 4,767 queued at Heathrow to get a ticket.

This year, because Christmas Eve falls on a Saturday, it is expected that more people will hope to fly. "We are trying to predict the unpredictable", Mr MacBeth, who has commandeered every available aircraft in BA's fleet, said.

"If necessary, we will use a Jumbo jet on the route to clear the queues, and my firm aim is to clear all the lounges by mid-afternoon of Christmas Eve."

Delays are inevitable as pas-

sengers are subjected to strict security checks and stand-by crews are rushed to aircraft.

More than 60 volunteers, ranging from senior managers to junior secretaries, have agreed to go to Heathrow on Friday and Saturday to assist passengers.

Spare aircraft and take-off slots have been made available through the cancellation of flights normally used by businessmen.

But other routes, especially to the Caribbean, will require additional aircraft to cope with the demand.

Practically every long-haul flight is over-booked and senior managers hope there will be the usual number of "no shows".

The concentration of effort is on

shuttle services, where the 12 Boeing 757s, BAC 1-11s and TriStars are already earmarked for duty. They are expected to carry up to 14,000 people on more than 100 flights on Friday.

The number of flights from Edinburgh and Glasgow to Gatwick is to be increased, it was announced yesterday.

Air UK, which operates the routes, will put on two additional weekday services in each direction, calling at both Scottish airports, from the start of the summer schedules on March 27.

That will mean a total of six flights to and from each destination on weekdays and four flights daily at weekends.

Perks help lift executive pay by 30%

By Tim Jones, Employment Affairs Correspondent

Benefits value as percentage of salaries

The pay of leading businessmen has risen by more than 30 per cent in the past year and a salary of £250,000 a year is within reach for successful chief executives, according to a survey published today.

The earnings of a director on £87,500, taking taxation cuts, fringe benefits and rises into account, increased by 31.5 per cent during 1987-88, the survey said.

On the same basis, an employee earning £12,750 saw his pay increase by only 3.8 per cent. For top directors, basic pay rose by up to 17.5 per cent, twice the rate for other employees.

Because of the bumper year,

the survey by Hay Management Consultants says, top executives have shaken off the effects of high taxation and pay freezes during the 1970s to restore the gap between their pay and that of junior managers.

However, the differentials

between senior directors and those on average earnings are still considerably less today than in 1971.

Cars, pension arrangements, medical insurance and other perks are worth about 40 per cent of the total cash payments made to directors;

share options add about 7 per cent to the rewards package.

Another factor in the increased remuneration has been the pressure created by the onset of the single European market in 1992. British executives still have some ground to make up on their French and German counterparts.

The typical value of a car received by a top director is £25-£30,000. There is less variation in the value of cars received than in other elements of the package.

Hay Boardroom Remuneration Guide (Hay Management Consultants, 52 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0AU; £595).

Dancing in first hour of 1989 may be illegal

By Our Legal Affairs Correspondent

Revellers on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve who dance at public functions after midnight may be breaking the law, according to one of the chief legal advisers to magistrates in England and Wales.

Mr John N. Spencer, clerk to the West Dorset justices, says today that because both days fall on a Saturday, dancers who do not stop at midnight could fall foul of the Sunday Observance Acts.

A special hours certificate can be obtained for nightclub entertainment, although there is no general exemption for public dancing, he says. This

poses problems for magistrates, who may be asked for permission to supply drink by organizers of a public dance which runs into Sunday.

They are surprised, he says, when magistrates are "understandably reluctant to be seen to give the seal of authority to functions which on the face of it are in breach of the law".

He argues there is a case for reform. It seems "slightly unfair that a seedy nightclub may stay open but the local village hall must close even though it has a public entertainment licence".

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How Nimrod and the Queen of Light saved a pilot from the storm

By Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

An RAF Nimrod maritime patrol aircraft with a Christmas tree and a beauty queen called the Queen of Light on board helped in the dramatic rescue of a Norwegian helicopter pilot who was trapped on a mountain after engine failure forced him to crash land in appalling weather conditions.

The pilot's distress signal was first picked up on Sunday afternoon by a special search and rescue satellite, called Sarat, jointly operated by the Soviet Union, the

United States, Britain, Canada and France.

The May Day was transmitted via a Norwegian earth station to Britain's rescue coordination centre at Plymouth and then on to RAF Pireavie in Scotland which immediately radioed to a Nimrod already on a flying mission.

The Nimrod, flown by Flight Lieutenant David Brown, was on its way to a US naval station at Keflavik in Iceland to deliver a Christmas tree which was due to be presented by Miss Tracey Littlejohn, a 17-year-old student who

had won a beauty contest in Aberdeen and was crowned the Queen of Light.

The Nimrod, Christmas tree and beauty queen were diverted to a mountainous region of Norway, 60 miles east of the town of Bergen. Flight Lieutenant Brown picked up the Norwegian pilot's radio beacon and for two hours flew the Nimrod around the location of the crashed helicopter at 15,000 ft to help direct the rescue teams approaching the area by land.

The RAF said yesterday that it was vital for the Nimrod to stay in

position because for a long time it was impossible for the rescue teams to get through.

A spokesman said: "The conditions were terrible. There was a white-out (a blinding snowstorm). Eleven 'Snowcat' vehicles tried to get through but failed. The pilot was only wearing light clothes and was getting very cold."

"The Nimrod pilot contacted him on the hour every hour to make sure he was all right."

"They didn't speak all the time because the Norwegian wanted to preserve the batteries in his radio."

After two hours the Nimrod, which had originally taken off from RAF Kinloss near Inverness, was relieved by another Nimrod sent from RAF St Mawgan in Cornwall.

Flight Lieutenant Brown and his beauty queen flew on to complete their Christmas mission in Iceland.

The second Nimrod stayed in the area until nearly midnight on Sunday when the weather suddenly changed, allowing a Norwegian C130 Hercules transport aircraft to get through and take over the job of pinpointing the crashed pilot. Eventually he was rescued by a

Norwegian Sea King helicopter at 4am yesterday.

"He was cold but otherwise unharmed", the RAF said.

The Norwegian pilot, who was not named, had been flying in a small helicopter on a trip from France.

The satellite that picked up his signal is one of four low orbiting satellites launched in an international venture. Two, called Sarat, have been launched by the US and the other two, called Cospas, by the Soviet Union. The first was launched in 1982.



Castro's socialist time warp keeps perestroika at bay

From Charles Bremner
Havana

The old man grunted the question as he polished the chrome on an ancient black Packard in one of Havana's pretty waterfront streets. "What do you mean, 'the class war is over'?" Gangsters like Meyer Lansky used to prowl their gambling playgrounds here in such machines.

Like many *habaneros*, the driver was ignorant of the new thinking about the old truths from Moscow. President Castro's tightly run media neglected to mention the bombshells from President Gorbachev's New York speech last week. One diplomat said: "After all, how can you proclaim the end of the closed society in a place that runs one of the tightest? There is no hint of *glasnost* in the trade wind that ruffles the palms on the Malecon waterfront here."

It is one of the strange signs of the times that the honest commodity in Havana this month should be an unexpurgated copy of an address by the Soviet party chief. Even a copy of Moscow's *New Times* monthly is an under-the-counter item.

But that is the nature of the double time-war now afflicting this Caribbean island of 10 million people as it gears up to celebrate the 30th anniversary next month of Dr Fidel Castro's triumphant

entry to the city on board a tank, the event that ended the rule of the dictator Fulgencio Batista and decades of American hegemony.

Isolation is afflicting Cuba from both sides. The impact of a quarter century of US "blockade", as they call it here, has taken a huge and visible toll. There is no trade and American citizens are still liable to prosecution by their own authorities for coming here. On the other side of the warp, Havana is clinging to a romantic notion of pure socialism that is being fast shed as obsolete by the Kremlin. So obviously is the ideological

Unrest beneath a placid surface

rug being pulled from under his permanent revolution that President Castro has cracked jokes to visitors about running "Albania West". He has not been helped by the cancellation of what he had hoped would have been a fence-meeting visit from Mr Gorbachev last week. Like the London visit, it fell victim to the Armenian earthquake.

Though he is as ebullient as ever, despite his 62 years and greying beard, the *Jefe Maximo* is said by those who know him to be anguishing over his inability to take his revolution beyond

its ever more precarious dependence on Moscow. The Kremlin underwrites Cuba with about \$13 million (£7 million) a day. Fervent young Cubans tell you that such aid is Moscow's internationalist duty to a comrade in the crusade for the Marxist-Leninist future at home and around the Third World.

Privately, the Russians use terms they might apply to an indulged adolescent and tell you they are growing impatient, though they will stick by their ally. "We cannot really tell Fidel what to do," says one of Moscow's Latin American specialists. Communism has brought undeniable advances in education and medical care.

Grinding poverty was eliminated and all this despite the flight of the country's technical and managerial elite after the revolution. At the expense of personal freedoms, it has also bred a pride and patriotism in a population that was mostly born since the revolution.

But despite the country's permanent war footing, it has become hard, as the years have passed, to explain the shortages of basic goods such as fish, vegetables, chicken and coffee on the Caribbean's biggest island.

Foreign residents report widespread unrest beneath the placid surface. Disaffected youths, sporting the beloved American brand logos and speaking the

"Spanglish" of the Latin Caribbean, talk openly of their dreams of Florida.

Nowhere else but in Havana — including Nicaragua — do they play "Moon River" over the loudspeakers as grim border guards scrutinize your passport from airport booths that come straight from Eastern Europe. In streets lined with shabby and near-empty shops, fleets of old Plymouths, Chevrolets, and Studebakers vie with Hungarian buses and Kamaz trucks belching the unmistakable fumes from Soviet diesel.

Along with them, the clanking Ladas, Volgas, and Jupiter motorcycles and sidecars look like the state of automotive art. As in East Europe, it takes scarce hard currency to buy any Western goods or even enjoy the floor show at the famed Tropicana nightclub.

And just as in the fraternal countries, traffic is halted to allow the passage of bus-borne delegations of foreign VIPs. This week the honoured guests were here for a Latin American film festival, one of the regular gatherings that Cuba runs to keep high its cultural banner.

Hardships aside, here was something pleasantly nostalgic in these days of money and market-worship to find an army of earnest cinema workers debating imperialism, the masses and revolution, helped along with plenty of good rum beneath the Caribbean stars. This is

still the rhetoric of Cuba, and as fast as Mr Gorbachev is shedding the old dogmas in favour of "freedom of choice" and a "language of individual liberties", Dr Castro is reverting to them. While Moscow has brushed aside its old propaganda and discovered the benefits of profits and wage incentives, he is in the middle of a drive against all remnants of private enterprise.

As the Soviet leader spoke at the United Nations, police were rounding up "anti-socialist elements" in the town of Camaguey who were illicitly making and selling furniture. Hundreds have been

Cuba is isolated by East and West

arrested in the crackdown against illegal economic activity, which includes old women who hold people's places in queues for a fee.

But at the same time there are relatively few political prisoners compared with earlier years. In true Leninist fashion, the supreme reward for the Cuban *Nuevo Hombre* is supposed to be the joy of duty well performed. Slogans everywhere proclaim the honour of labour, just as they did in Russia.

To ram home the return to fundamentals, the memory of Che Guevara,

the pure revolutionary, is being evoked with posters, murals and publications. President Castro flatly rejects the idea of applying *perestroika* to Cuba. He recently called market reforms "complete trash", and in a speech on December 7 aimed at preparing the ground for the Gorbachev visit, he said that Cuba had made too many mistakes in the past through imitating the experiments of socialist countries.

For Cuba-watchers from East and West, the 30th anniversary marks the close of an era in Latin America and the Third World. Few anywhere are attracted by Dr Castro's heady brand of Marxism-Leninism.

With no organized dissent, powerful security police and continuing personal popularity, *Fidelismo* is likely to be around for many years. The leader's own wishes are clear from a new slogan that is being banded around town — "with the party and together with Fidel, we are marching to 2000". Much will hang on relations with Washington, which under President Reagan rebuffed repeated Cuban overtures.

Some pessimists see Dr Castro retreating further into isolation with old age, convinced that only he understands what is good for Cuba and embittered by what he sees as the superpowers dealing over his head.

Soviet reforms spread to school classrooms

From Mary Dejevsky, Moscow

The Soviet Union, which has earned admiration for giving its school leavers a mastery of the basic educational skills, is to switch the emphasis of its education system from the collective to the individual.

Addressing journalists yesterday on the eve of the country's first national education congress, the Head of the State Education Committee, Mr Gennady Yagodin, said pupils would in future be treated as the subject rather than the object of education.

The old system, he said, had too often stifled individual initiative. This had caused psychological damage to those children who stood out from the crowd, and probably deprived the country and society of some of its brightest and most original minds.

Too many teachers, he said, had been encouraged to keep the level down.

They had treated their pupils like nails — if one stood out further than the rest it needed to be hammered on the head until it was the same height.

In future, Mr Yagodin said, the Soviet system would encourage individual development and interests at all levels. It would also offer a choice of curriculum in

secondary schools, with pupils in their final two years being allowed to concentrate on three, four or five subjects. Until now, all school courses had been compulsory.

Mr Yagodin said that discussion was still going on about which subjects would be compulsory in the last two years of school, but he favoured language and literature (this would be Russian or the pupil's native tongue), modern history and social studies.

Social studies at the moment covers such political courses as "history of the Communist Party", "dialectical materialism" and "scientific communism". But he said the content and the approach was likely to be revised.

In response to a question, he revealed that history examinations, which were cancelled at the end of the last academic year because the revision of history was moving too fast for the text books, would be reinstated at the end of this academic year. The course, however, would be more limited than before, and there would be no penalty for pupils who disagreed with the views expressed in the course materials.

There would also be a new

approach to teaching literature. It was proposed to give teachers more say in the books they taught — on the grounds that they would teach better if they liked what they were teaching — and the emphasis on background analysis in the final two years would be dropped. It had produced school leavers, Mr Yagodin said, who knew what Tolstoy's "mistakes" were, but who had not read *War and Peace*.

Mr Yagodin also disclosed that the Soviet Union had a problem with pupils who left school virtually illiterate. This was a personal misfortune for them, he said, and for the state. "Who knows how many we are losing?" he asked. The changes were designed to make learning more pleasurable and more accessible.

Asked why mathematics was not among the compulsory subjects he favoured for the final two years of schooling, he said it was because reading gave a pleasure that could be enjoyed by everyone, whereas the satisfaction gained from calculating a square root had more limited appeal. A deputy education minister sitting beside him disagreed, however, and

Mother Teresa in Yerevan



Mother Teresa arriving yesterday in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, where she vowed to give "tender love and care to the people" hit by the earthquake in the republic on December 7. In talks with the Prime Minister, Mr Nikolai Ryzhkov, heading relief operations, Mother

US and EEC on brink of meat war

From Michael Dynes
Brussels

The world's two largest trading partners stood on the brink of a full transatlantic trade war yesterday after the European Commission announced it had drawn up a list of counter-retaliatory measures to be applied if the United States carries out its threat to impose a ban on EEC meat imports.

The announcement follows a series of discussions at the weekend between Mr Willy de Clercq, the Commissioner for External Relations, Mr Frans Andriessen, the Commissioner for Agriculture, and a group of high-level officials over the long-running dispute concerning American exports of hormone-treated meat.

The failure of the discussions to bridge the gap between Washington and the Community meant that, in the absence of an eleventh-hour compromise, the two trading partners will be locked into a spiral of destructive retaliation and counter-retaliation beginning on January 1.

The move comes after the failure of a group of countries, principally Britain and The Netherlands, to convince their European partners to postpone the Community's ban on imports of hormone-treated meat for three to six months in order to provide more time to reach a compromise.

The Commission opposed a postponement of the ban on the ground that it would discriminate against Community farmers who are prohibited from selling any kind of hormone-treated meat, and would also undermine the negotiating credibility of the Community in future trade talks with the US.

The EEC is expected to take America to the dispute panel of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) today to obtain a ruling on the legitimacy of US retaliation.

But Mr Alfred Kingston, the US Ambassador to the Community, said that Washington would not be talked out of retaliation if the hormone ban went into effect.

He expressed his disappointment at what he called the Community's lack of flexibility over the dispute, and warned that "if the hormone ban goes into effect, there will be almost instantaneous retaliation" — which observers understood to mean January 1.

The origins of the current dispute stem from a decision by the Commission in 1985, following intense pressure from the European Parliament and a variety of consumer groups, to impose a ban on imports of meat treated with growth hormones for fear of the damaging side-effects on people.

American retaliation is expected to affect meat exports worth an estimated \$110 million (\$61 million), principally from Italy, Denmark and Spain.

The Community's retaliation package includes the imposition of punitive tariffs on US imports worth more than \$140 million of natural honey, dried fruit, nuts, corn and lentils, will be implemented "without delay" if the US goes ahead with its retaliation, Mr de Clercq said. But the move will need final approval by the Council of Ministers.

After the start of the Palestine Liberation Organization's talks with Washington, Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary, said the EEC had played a key role in bringing the two sides together and intended to remain in close contact with the US Administration to monitor progress.

WORLD ROUNDUP

Bush to review debt strategy

Washington — President-elect George Bush yesterday called for a complete review of the West's Third World debt strategy, which he said could have important national security implications for his Administration (Bailey Morris writes).

At a White House news conference, Mr Bush disclosed that he had ordered his Treasury team, under Mr Nicholas Brady, and the National Security Council, to be headed by Mr Brent Scowcroft, to take "a whole new look at Third World debt". Mr Bush's comments followed the release of a new World Bank study which said that the drain of funds from the economies of the 17 most heavily indebted nations, the bulk of them in Latin America, had accelerated alarmingly.

● Post for Kemp: Mr Bush yesterday named Congressman Jack Kemp, a conservative former political rival for the Republican nomination, to be his Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (Michael Binyon writes). He said Mr Kemp's innovative ideas were essential to end the "national shame" of homelessness.

Vanuatu ruling

Sydney — The Chief Justice of Vanuatu ruled yesterday that President Sokomanu had no constitutional power to dissolve Parliament and declared his interim government illegal (Christopher Morris writes). Two injunctions were issued restraining the President from action against the Lini Government. The President, whose declaration dissolving Parliament and appointing on Sunday of Mr Barak Sopo as Prime Minister provoked the crisis, was silenced by the Supreme Court. But tension is mounting as supporters of Mr Sopo, now under arrest, have taken up arms.

Metro back in action

Paris — An early spot of Christmas cheer arrived yesterday for the long-suffering commuters of Paris (Philip Jacobson writes). After weeks of strikes, which have strangled the capital's public transport system, maintenance crews on two more lines of the Metro have decided to resume work immediately. Another Metro line, closed since December 12, should be offering limited services from Thursday. The Parisian transport authority announced also that the B line of the fast electric network serving the suburbs would be back in action next week.

Malaysia accused

The human rights group, Amnesty International, today cites cases of cruelty against Malaysians detained without trial in a mass arrest and calls for the release of 16 people it says are still being held. In a report it refers to the detention of at least 106 people between October and November, 1987, under Malaysia's Internal Security Act, which allows detention without trial, to ensure that civil liberties are safeguarded and to investigate allegations of torture without delay.

Lisbon Socialist vote

Lisbon — The election of Dr Jorge Sampaio, aged 49, a Lisbon lawyer, as the new leader of Portugal's Socialist Party was virtually assured at the weekend when he secured 836 delegates. This compared with 453 for his nearest contender, Senhor Jaime Gama, in elections for delegates to the party congress in January in Lisbon (Martha de la Cal writes).

Italy's bleak lesson for Armenia

Quake survivors face bitter legacy

From Roger Boyes
Rome

Counting the bodies, naming the dead and sheltering the living does not mark the end of an earthquake disaster.

When the shaky buildings and fractured girders of Armenia have been blasted and the crying has stopped, then the earthquake relief specialists should turn their eyes to Italy where, eight years after the Naples earthquake, there is still bitterness, chaos and political feuding.

Last week Signor Ciriaco De Mita, the Prime Minister, and other Italian politicians tried to counter charges about the abuse and embezzlement of funds for the 1980 earthquake, which killed 5,000, injured 8,000 and left 250,000 homeless in the mountainous Iripina region east of Naples.

Signor De Mita's political task is merely to dissociate himself and his Christian Democratic Party from the mess. A commission will investigate the spending.

But the important questions go much deeper than the ritual tantrums of the Italian political scene. What happens to a region that has been so badly devastated? What happens

not only to the money that floods in, but also to the survivors, the local industry and the banks?

The hill towns of Iripina have changed more in the past eight years of bountiful earthquake relief than at any other comparable time in Italian history. Neither the Fascist years nor the unification of Italy had so much of an impact.

First, as one drives through the smaking approach roads, there is a physical shock of gutted buildings, untouched in eight years. The houses are skeletons and open as if for anatomical inspection.

Here on the cold windy hillsides there is nothing left of the exquisite medieval settlements. The wrecked kitchens and bathrooms can still be viewed like a perverse Ideal Home Exhibition.

Wooden crutches prop up the roofs. At the bottom of the valley, the victims — can they still be victims eight years afterwards? — live in prefabricated houses.

There are flower pots and banners that say *Buon Natale* (Merry Christmas). Farther down the valley there are new houses being slapped up, or finished in a raw red brick.

Signora Rosanna Repole, the Christian Democratic Mayor of Sant'Angelo dei Lombardi for the past eight years, declares: "Yes, it is true that we face a problem that could be called 'the psychology of the earthquake', the habit of depending on assistance given immediately after the tragedy."

"But what the community needs most is services. We cannot win this battle against disinformation and political manoeuvring."

"There have been no miracles here — we have just done

what we can. We have used 116 billion lire (£47.2 million) for private reconstruction and almost 90 billion lire for public reconstruction."

"If a commission wants to investigate how the money was spent, then let it. Those who made mistakes will pay."

The total aid for the region amounted to 60,000 billion lire. The first aid shipments, especially to Naples, were easy prey for organized crime. Trucks full of blankets and

food supplies were diverted by the Camorra, which set up a black market in food and shelter.

Later there were meatier pickings. There was no control over the bidding for contracts: one contract for reconstructing a railway line ballooned in a few years from 120 billion lire to 651 billion lire.

The same consortia landed the important deals again and again. Government funds allocated for rebuilding roads have almost doubled since 1983. All work is behind schedule. The biggest winners are the banks. The Bank of Iripina has seen its deposits go up by over 20 per cent in the last few years.

Whole new towns are being built, the old medieval towns abandoned to the valley winds and the sheep.

The case of Conza is typical. It was originally perched on the top of a small mountain to defend the inhabitants from the diseases that were carried and spread from the Ofanto river.

After the earthquake, the 1,000 inhabitants decided to rebuild their village on the floor of the valley.

But the question was: to the right or the left of the provin-

Eight years on there is chaos and political feuding

cial highway. The land on the right was owned by a relative of the mayor who wanted to cling on to his estate and so the new Conza was built on the left, on (as it swiftly emerged) a soggy plain.

The houses are slowly sinking, the cement bill for reinforced foundations is huge. Engineers are damning and shifting the course of rivers. All is influx, nothing complete.

The locals talk of another kind of structural damage that has nothing to do with geology. The traditional solidarity of the hilltop community has been shattered.

Nowadays everybody keeps to themselves behind the flimsy walls of their prefabs, dwelling in a limbo between the destroyed old and the unfinished new worlds.

The post-earthquake generation has grown up on social welfare and with their cash grants have bought motorcycles and shiny Japanese Jeeps.

The casual building jobs have dried up despite the bustle of reconstruction. Unemployment has doubled since the earthquake.

Eight years on, a chilling prospect for the ruined townships of Armenia.

Debts and one-piece sink bikini

From Philip Jacobson, Paris

A piece of history, two pieces perhaps, departs this world at midnight on Christmas Eve when the French firm that made the original, authentic, accept-no-substitute bikini goes out of business.

Forty-two years have passed since M Louis Reard, the beachwear designer of the time (left, with one of his creations on a display dummy), scandalized polite society, and delighted the rest, with a revolutionary swimsuit composed of two smallish items of polka-dotted cotton.

According to the late M Reard — whose training as an automobile engineer may have come in handy with the structural problems his new creation required — the name was taken from the Pacific still of Bikini, scene of the first post-war nuclear test. The aim, he readily conceded, was to cash in on the

impact this had on people around the globe.

Well, the early public appearances of the bikini were certainly explosive affairs: although M Reard's little garment was soon on the front page of every glossy magazine, most of the beaches were not quite ready for it. It took several years to become cautiously acceptable, and then mostly in what the French had always considered the more *louche* corners of the world — the French Riviera and certain resorts in Italy.

Understood, M Reard went back to the drawing board and, 20 years later, launched the one-piece monokini, said to expose 50 per cent more of the wearer's flesh than its predecessor. Predictably, there were outraged protests; equally predictably, a new generation of film stars — Brigitte Bardot in-

cluded — could hardly wait to slip into it.

By now, the enterprising M Reard was in the money, but, as time passed, he was obliged to spend more and more of it protecting the Bikini trademark from unscrupulous and ever more daring imitators. When he died four years ago, the firm was already in serious financial trouble and the present trend towards ultra-slinky one-piece swimwear merely exacerbated its problems.

So, farewell then to *La sociale Reard*. But perhaps one of the original model bikinis survive, mothballed in tissue paper at the back of some former bathing beauty's wardrobe, a reminder of the June day on which Louis Reard hired the Mollitor indoor swimming pool in Paris to launch the name that will live for evermore.

Defiant PLO vows to keep up its attacks on Israel

From Christopher Walker, Tunis

The Palestine Liberation Organization yesterday rebuffed the idea of bilateral peace talks floated by Mr Shimon Peres, the leader of Israel's Labour Party, and announced that Palestinian attacks against "Israeli military targets" would continue until the Palestinians achieved a homeland.

The PLO's defiant stance illustrated the extent of the difficulties of a Middle East peace settlement. It also made clear that attacks which Israel is certain to brand as "terrorist acts" will not stop, as Western diplomats had hoped.

In an interview Mr Khalid al-Hassan, one of the PLO's most senior figures, stressed that the organization would never agree to peace negotiations outside the context of an international conference.

"What does Peres want? Us to crawl naked to the negotiating table?" he said. "This problem began internationally, and it has to be resolved internationally."

Mr al-Hassan cited the French resistance to the Nazis during the Second World War and the more recent help provided to the Afghan guerrillas by the Reagan Administration to justify the PLO's flat refusal to abandon attacks inside Israel and the occupied territories until Is-

rael hands back the land conquered in 1967. "We are still in a state of war, how can we stop our struggle? The Israelis are killing our people at the average of one a day and yet people want us to stop talking about a struggle."

He added: "We deal with the reality on the ground. Within original Israel and the occupied territories, the Palestinians have the right to attack military targets."

Mr al-Hassan, the eminence grise behind Mr Yasser

Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, met a positive American reaction during the start of his visit yesterday (A Correspondent writes). Before meeting the federal Chancellor, Herr Franz Vranitzky, he discussed making peace with Israel.

Arafat's Fatah movement (which he helped found) is regarded by Western analysts as one of the more moderate voices inside the PLO.

The strength of his remarks yesterday was a blow to any who had been expecting further compromises by the PLO following Mr Arafat's United Nations speech and press conference in Geneva last week. Rejecting another sug-

gested compromise from Mr Peres that the PLO should halt the *intifada* as a prelude to peace talks, Mr al-Hassan, head of the foreign affairs committee of the Palestine National Council, said: "The *intifada* brought everything to us."

"The superpowers do not deal with any situation unless it is hot. That is exactly what Dr Henry Kissinger once told the late President Sadat."

His remarks appear to confirm the prediction of many Western observers in Tunis that the vexed question of political violence and definitions of "terrorism" are likely to prove one of the main stumbling blocks in maintaining the recent momentum in the peace process.

Like other PLO leaders, he claimed that the time had come to turn world attention to Israeli actions which he described as "terrorism" and which he said had largely been ignored by the US.

"They are the ones who bomb civilians outside their own borders, hitting our camps in Lebanon and killing women and children," he stated. "The time has come to turn that question to them."

In order to preclude the chance of the new US-PLO dialogue being derailed by new attacks launched by

Palestinian splinter groups, like the Libya-based fanatics led by Mr Abu Nidal (who are outside the PLO), Mr al-Hassan called for the setting up of an international committee which could examine future terrorist attacks and apportion blame.

"It should investigate anything which is perpetrated in the civilian quarter: that is savage, and we are totally against it."

Speaking in the shuttered front room of a villa in the suburbs of Tunis whose Tunisian military guard has recently been stepped up in case of reprisal raids by Israeli commandos, the PLO strategist added: "It is unfair to ask Arafat to control people like Abu Nidal who are outside his control. Can the Germans control the activities of the Baader-Meinhof group or the Italian stop attacks by the Mafia or the Red Brigades?"

Switching to an issue which has yet to receive much attention in the renewed debate about a settlement to the Middle East crisis, Mr al-Hassan claimed it would have to provide sufficient compensation or rights for the estimated 1.5 million Palestinians who were forced out of their homes when the state of Israel was declared and who now live in the Diaspora.

Hostel for immigrants hit by bombs



Firemen examining the wreckage of a car destroyed by two of three bombs which exploded at the entrance to an immigrants' hostel early yesterday at Cagnes-sur-Mer, near Nice in the south

of France, killing one person and injuring 12 (Susan MacDonald writes). Pamphlets left at the scene were signed by the obscure "execution wing" of the National Committee of French Jews,

Massada. The panic caused by the first two bombs sent residents, mainly North Africans, rushing for the exit when the third bomb exploded killing Mr George Iordachescu, a Romanian, aged 48.

Sri Lanka election

Most disregard boycott order

From Edward Gorman, Colombo

The people of Sri Lanka defied a nationwide boycott order by the underground Sinhalese extremist JVP, and came out to vote in larger than expected numbers in presidential elections yesterday.

Although predictions varied, average turnout was estimated at between 50 and 60 per cent despite widespread violence across the island which claimed at least 36 lives during Sunday night and yesterday.

The JVP, or Peoples Liberation Front, vowing to overthrow current and future Colombo governments, had threatened to kill those who took part in what they regard as illegitimate elections.

As expected, attendance at polling stations was uneven. In areas where the JVP has traditionally been strong —

particularly the poor inland areas of the violent south — many polling stations remained deserted throughout the day. In at least one southern village no one voted at all.

Attendance was also reportedly thin in the predominantly Tamil areas of the north and east which have been hit by a separatist insurgency during the last five years.

The Sinhalese minority in the east was an exception, turning out enthusiastically.

After months of increasing violence with an assassination campaign by the JVP which has claimed over 700 lives and lately, retaliatory killings by pro-government paramilitary groups, widespread fears that there would be a bloodbath on polling day turned out to be overstated.

Fearful villagers in south stay at home

From Our Correspondent, Tiligoda, Sri Lanka

There was no presidential election to speak of in this charming southern village and many others like it yesterday.

Here, where at least 15 (some say 40) have died in grisly pre-election blood-letting, people were simply too scared to disobey the boycott ordered by the underground Sinhalese extremist People's Liberation Front (JVP).

The main street, where booby-trapped or bullet-riddled bodies have been dumped with increasing regularity during the past two weeks was

to an unforgivable betrayal of the motherland. The punishment was as swift as it was barbaric. At 9.30 on the evening of December 2 his wife, Leela, and his son Lal, aged 22, were dragged out of the house and garrotted to a cutting in the lane. They were made to kneel before being battered to death with wooden carpenter's mallets.

Across the neat rice paddies, another house was in mourning, with another family too scared to vote. The mother of two young men who the villagers say were shot by the Army last week on suspicion of being involved in JVP activities, simply brought the palms of her hands together in the traditional Buddhist greeting and wept.

completely deserted four hours after polling opened.

Only a few villagers dared to peep from behind closed shutters at the unwelcome sight of inquisitive strangers.

At the local primary school, election officials guarded by soldiers sporting American-made M16 rifles, sat tapping the desks with nothing to do. "They are too scared to come," was how the supervising officer who had been brought in from the north under armed guard, summed up this essay in tyranny.

He was, however, able to report that 34 of the 841 eligible voters in Tiligoda had sneaked in to cast their forbidden ballots in the first 20 minutes after he opened the poll at 7am.

He said he hoped more would venture out later in the day, but he was hardly confident.

Across the road up a little dirt track a man, aged 40, who said his name was Manes broke down when I asked him why he had not voted. "We didn't vote, we are scared to," he said through an interpreter. "We have received a letter from the JVP telling us not to go out."

Manes makes his meagre living by selling vegetables he grows in the small plot of land behind his four-room house with its corrugated-iron roof. He has paid dearly for his open support of the ruling United National Party. To the JVP this amounted

Six miles south of here in the district capital, Matara, there was at least a semblance of democracy as a steady stream of mostly elderly people made their way to polling stations.

At Rajahm College, which has been closed for months, its buildings disfigured by JVP slogans in blood-red circular Sinhalese script, 300 people had voted by 11am.

At army headquarters, in between speaking into his walkie-talkie to supervise the massive security operation launched to combat ex-

pected violence during the day, Colonel Priyanka Perera put it all down to what he described as "clear psychosis".

These were the worst conditions for an election he could remember and the psychosis could be destroyed, he said, only by destroying the "terrorists". "Nobody wants the JVP other than the JVP themselves," he said.

The young assistant election commissioner for the town, Mr Mahinda Desakpriya, acknowledged that his job marked him out for assassination.

"This is no problem," he said with a smile. "If I am supporting justice and democracy, I am happy to die."

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Gandhi sets out menu for peace in Peking

From Our Correspondent, Peking

Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister, began an historic visit to Peking yesterday by calling for a new friendship with China and a solution to a bitter border dispute that has soured relations for nearly three decades.

Mr Gandhi, the first Indian leader to visit China since his grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru 34 years ago, said the Himalayan border was a big problem but it was now time to look to the future. "I have come to renew our old friendship," he said in a speech at a banquet given by the Chinese Prime Minister, Mr Li Peng, in the Great Hall of the People.

Recalling close bilateral ties in the 1950s, Mr Gandhi urged the restoration of the "vision of peace and co-operation" shared by Nehru and the late Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai.

He said: "I hope that this visit will bring us a new beginning." Mr Li replied: "There is no reason for our two countries not to get along."

The speeches by the two leaders focused on the similarities between their two nations — on their large populations, cultural history, and on the

joint initiation of the "five principles of peaceful co-existence" which China and India drafted in 1954 and which remain the official basis of their foreign policy.

They dwelt only briefly on the border issue. Mr Li hoped that it could be resolved through "friendly consultation in a spirit of mutual understanding and mutual accommodation", while Mr Gandhi urged a solution "based on an understanding of each other's point of view, which will be in our mutual interest and to the benefit of both our peoples".

"We are confident that the boundary question will be settled amicably," Mr Gandhi added.

In talks earlier with Mr Li, he called for calm on the heavily guarded border, scene of a brief war in 1962, while the two countries increased co-operation in other matters.

India claims 14,500 square miles of land held by China in the western Himalayas and China claims 56,000 square miles of territory in Indian hands.

Mr Gandhi's remarks appeared to confirm India had abandoned its position that

the dispute must be solved before bilateral relations could improve, moving closer to China's view that the border issue could be divorced from other subjects.

Peking-based diplomats have cautioned, however, that a big breakthrough on the border issue is unlikely during Gandhi's five-day visit.

The two men also discussed Tibet, a sensitive issue because of the presence of the Dalai Lama, and 100,000 Tibetan refugees in India since the early 1960s.

Mr Gandhi said India recognized Tibet as a region of China and that his Government did not permit "political forces" in India to engage in activities harmful to China's internal affairs.

Some 200 Tibetans demonstrated in Delhi yesterday calling on Mr Gandhi to urge China to respect human rights in the troubled region.

Less than 24 hours before Mr Gandhi's arrival, more than 150 Tibetans marched close to the Great Hall of the People in protest at police shootings of pro-independence demonstrators in Lhasa on December 10.



Mr Gandhi wielding chopsticks at a Peking banquet where he urged an end to the border dispute between India and China.

Victory for airline hostesses in pay case

Wellington (AFP) — Seventeen Air New Zealand air hostesses, who had sought damages totalling \$NZ1.5 million (£497,000), won an eight-year battle with the airline and their union over alleged sexual discrimination.

The Equal Opportunities Tribunal ordered the company to take immediate steps to promote the 14 complainants still employed by the company, saying its career structure denied the women promotion offered to similarly qualified men. Damages are to be agreed between the parties or, failing a deal, will be fixed by the High Court.

Detention law

Singapore (Reuters) — The Government said it would amend legislation so courts would be unable to question state powers of detention without trial.

Jiang cancer

Peking (Reuters) — Mao Tse-tung's widow, Jiang Qing, has been freed from jail and is receiving hospital treatment for throat cancer, an official magazine reported.

Victim buried

Madrid — The funeral was held near here of a policeman killed by a weekend car bombing in the northern town of Eibar. The blast was blamed on Eta guerrillas.

Flood deaths

Jakarta (AFP) — Torrential rains burst dams in Java, triggering floods and landslides killing at least 40 people.

Marcos better

Honolulu (AFP) — Mr Ferdinand Marcos, the former President of the Philippines, left a Hawaiian hospital after his heart condition improved.

Tycoon held

Rome (Reuters) — Signor Elio Graziano, an industrialist wanted in connection with a fraud inquiry into a \$61 million contract for Italian railway bedding, was arrested.

Vintner trial

Mainz (Reuters) — Seven Rhine wine merchants went on trial in West Germany charged with selling 50 million litres of adulterated wine.

Decade of Cambodia conflict winding down

Hanoi pulls out 18,000 troops

From Humphrey Hawksley, Xamat, Vietnamese-Cambodian border

The troops came home yesterday. Some of the toughest soldiers in the world in some of the tuffest uniforms rode a convoy of trucks out of Cambodia in what Hanoi claims to be its biggest withdrawal of troops in 10 years of fighting.

Behind them were anti-aircraft guns, which had been used against Thai aircraft and 105mm artillery, which had pounded Khmer Rouge guerrilla positions for the past decade.

The Vietnamese military commander embraced the Cambodian civilian provincial leader of Kampong Cham. Children lined the road, waving flags depicting Vietnamese-Cambodian friendship.

But the banners thanking the troops for fulfilling their glorious duty showed the differences between the two countries — the Cambodian written

in a Sanskrit derivative script, the Vietnamese in Roman lettering. The chief military spokesman, General Nguyen Van Thai, looked surprised when asked if many Vietnamese soldiers had married Cambodian girls. They had not.

Eighteen thousand troops are coming out of Cambodia before Christmas, according to the Vietnamese. Six thousand along this route, arriving after a four-day trek from Battambang and Siem Reap in the north-west of the country near the Thai border. The rest are making their way along three other land routes and in boats down the Mekong river.

Fifty thousand will stay behind until 1990. About 55,000 have died or been wounded in the invasion and occupation of Cambodia. But General Thai says the situation is under control. All

Vietnamese military advisers left in June this year. Cambodians are going to Vietnam and the Soviet Union for training. He denied reports that Vietnamese soldiers were being infiltrated into the poorly-equipped Cambodian Army to ensure the Khmer Rouge did not come to power again.

But the Khmer Rouge is still in evidence. Troops with mine-detectors were checking the road as the convoy approached. Soldiers with machineguns were hiding in the undergrowth, and Mr Pres Samoeur, the vice-chairman of Kampong Cham province, said that Khmer Rouge killings had increased in the past year. He estimated that there were 1,000 guerrillas in his province of 600,000 people.

Asked why after 10 years in Cambodia, Vietnamese troops had not killed or captured Pol

Pot or his senior aides, General Thai replied: "They live on Thai territory. If they were on the other side, who knows?"

The Vietnamese are pulling out of Cambodia because they want to improve relations with the West, which has questioned its troop withdrawal figures. But its paymaster, the Soviet Union, is also closing the cheque book.

But the problem is what to do with the Army. The authorities say 25 per cent of the men — or 300,000 — may be demobilized.

● BANGKOK: Cambodia staged a farewell fiesta for groups of departing Vietnamese troops yesterday, giving maximum publicity to the withdrawal (Reuters reports).

About 10,000 people lined the banks of the Mekong river in Phnom Penh waving miniature flags.

Hopes fade for quick end to the civil war in Sudan

From Andrew Buckoke, Nairobi

The postponement of peace talks scheduled for this week between a Sudanese Government delegation and members of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army in Addis Ababa has reinforced doubts that rapid progress towards ending the civil war is possible.

The government delegation was originally due to leave Khartoum on Sunday, but will not now depart until next week, according to the Foreign Minister, Mr Abu Salih.

In the meantime, Lieutenant-Colonel Fikre-Selassie Wogderes, the Ethiopian Prime Minister, and President Mengistu's deputy, is expected in Khartoum.

Mr Sadiq al-Mahdi, the Sudanese Prime Minister, has insisted in the past that the continuation of the five-year-old civil war was due more to Ethiopian government support for the rebels than the

grievances of the Southern population.

The decision to hold talks with the Ethiopians before the rebels will reinforce many Southerners' fears that the Muslim, Arabic North is only considering a peace agreement to provide a temporary respite from the drain on its resources caused by the war.

They do not believe the North has accepted the African, mainly Christian or animist, South's demands for greater autonomy and a fair share of the nation's resources. The South is almost totally undeveloped.

It is now certain that Mr al-Mahdi's prediction earlier this month that a ceasefire would be in place in two weeks will not be fulfilled.

His assurance that the constitutional conference, which would decide the future political structure of Sudan and so provide for a final

peace agreement, would be convened by December 31 is unlikely to be met.

Statements by Sudanese politicians should always be taken with a pinch of salt. The Times was assured more than two years ago by Dr Bashir Omer, then the Finance Minister, that the constitutional conference would be convened by the end of December, 1986.

Mr al-Mahdi's first coalition government came to power in May, 1986, with a mandate to seek peace and, in particular, to repeal the Islamic Sharia Law which was imposed by former President Nimeiry in 1983.

Although its harsher penalties are no longer implemented, the Sharia Law has remained in place and the Government has never proposed repealing it, only replacing it with another version of Sharia.

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Minister's £19m plan for eggs fails to satisfy

The Government's £19 million plan to help the poultry and egg industry in the wake of the steep drop in egg sales in recent weeks failed to address the main problem — the extent of salmonella in eggs and poultry — the Opposition said.

Dr David Clark, Opposition spokesman on agriculture, said that the statement of Mr John MacGregor, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, was complacent and fudged the main issue.

Mr MacGregor, in his statement, said that the uncertainty over the implications of *Salmonella enteritidis* had recently caused a sharp decline in egg sales. "The Government has decided, in these wholly exceptional circumstances, to introduce the following two short-term measures."

"The first will provide a payment to egg packers for the destruction of surplus eggs for a period of four weeks from December 21. The payment will be at the rate of 30p per dozen eggs on up to 1.1 million cases. That will tackle the overhang of eggs in the system."

"A second measure will be introduced to help the industry to reduce the size of the egg-laying flock. This will provide for a payment for a bird in the age range of 18 to 30 weeks. The scheme will enable up to four million hens, roughly equivalent to 10 per cent of the laying flock, to be culled under the supervision of agriculture departments."

"Taken together, these two short-term measures are designed to assist the egg industry to adjust to the market situation now confronting it. The estimated cost of these two schemes is, at maximum, £17 million in payments to the industry."

Conservative MPs: Outrageous! Mr MacGregor: There will also be payments which are estimated at £2 million to contractors and local authorities.

He said that he had told the European Commission of the actions. Parliamentary approval would be sought of estimates to cover the cost.

The Government had been formulating detailed plans to tackle the problem since the new information became available. Following the codes of practice, there was to be more stringent

AGRICULTURE

bacteriological monitoring of animal products for salmonella; registration of breeding flocks and hatcheries for hygiene-control purposes and stronger controls relating to imported animal products.

"I hope that the actions I have announced today, taken with the advertising campaign setting out the advice of the chief medical officer and presenting the facts to consumers, will help quickly to restore order to the egg market in the interests of consumers and of everyone working in that important sector of the food industry."

Dr David Clark, Opposition spokesman on agriculture, said that, after Mrs Currie's remarks, it was only a matter of time before the minister had to come to the House with proposals to spend taxpayers' money in an effort to bail out egg and poultry producers.

Since her gaffe a few weeks ago, egg sales had fallen by half

● These two short-term measures are designed to assist the egg industry to adjust to the market situation now confronting it ●

and the future, in the weeks to come, was even bleaker. They were now faced with an epidemic.

"We are disappointed with the statement, for he is yet again displaying the complacency which has characterized the Government's attitude to this problem all along."

He has manifestly failed to address the main problem of the extent of salmonella in eggs and poultry, which is the key to restoring public confidence in the safety of eating eggs and the long-term future of the industry.

"Whatever the facts, the public believe that there was an element of truth in Mrs Currie's comment, but the key question is how much is the threat of salmonella. The Secretary of State for Health (Mr Kenneth Clarke), by his support for his former junior minister, clearly has a different perspective from that of the Minister of Agriculture."

The people were left unaware

and confused about the extent of the problem.

He asked for a small group of experts to be set up to advise on the extent of salmonella and to work out what cash was needed to tackle the problem.

Cuts in the research budget on food and agriculture should be restored. Those had resulted in members of the team working on salmonella being given redundancy notices last month.

Could he confirm allegations made by Sir Richard Body (Holland with Boston, C) that the Conservative Government had watered down regulations on poultry-feed hygiene early in the 1980s?

Mr MacGregor said that obviously he regretted having to introduce the two schemes.

"I would much have preferred not to have to, but the plain fact is that we do face a very difficult situation in the market place. These are my final proposals. It is not intended that there should be further financial sums available from those I have announced."

Salmonella was extremely difficult to eradicate. This new strain of salmonella had also arisen in other countries. No country had mastered the problem of salmonella in animals and poultry because of the number of highly complex problems involved. Germs could come from the environment, from wild birds, and were sometimes very difficult indeed to eradicate.

"It would be misleading to say that it can be eradicated. What we are looking to do is at every stage of the production chain to look at measures that will minimize the risk."

It was not a fact that most eggs were infected with salmonella. Official sampling showed that the incidence in breeding flocks and laying flocks was very low. "If consumers follow the advice of the chief medical officer then the risks are very, very small indeed."

Mr David Steel (Tweedale, Ettrick and Lauderdale, Dem) asked if it was correct that those who had culled their birds before today would not benefit from the compensation scheme and that it was a future scheme only.

Since we cannot open our newspapers these days without reading of some food or other which is dangerous to eat, will it be the policy of his ministry to encourage, in the context of lower food production in Europe, a return to more natural



Mr Christopher Chope, Under Secretary of State, Environment, and minister responsible for the Property Services Agency, "topping out" the agency's renovation of the central tower of the the Houses of Parliament yesterday. The 150-year-old orb had been removed for regilding

and less artificial means of production especially in food-stuffs."

Mr MacGregor said that it would not be possible to make payments to those who had already culled their flocks.

"I do not think that it would be right to do that. We have moved with great speed. All producers, who are in a very difficult situation, will benefit indirectly and they will benefit much more than if we had not taken these measures."

A good deal more of his department's resources were being used to ensure safety in food. References to more natural foods had to be taken in context.

It was not the case that free-range eggs were in any different position from battery-hen eggs as far as salmonella was concerned.

Mr Ralph Howell (North Norfolk, C): This problem was brought about by misinformation and incompetence by a minister (loud protest). Those who have suffered should be fully compensated and his statement is totally unsatisfactory.

Mr MacGregor said that he had brought forward measures very quickly to assist the egg industry. "I have been doing everything I can to get the facts over about eggs."

Mr Jack Ashley (Stoke-on-Trent-South, Lab) said that there were 1,000 cases of salmonella food poisoning associated with eggs in the first 10 months of this year.

"On what date did this particular minister first warn Parliament and the country about the dangers of salmonella?"

Mr MacGregor said that advice was issued on August 25 by

● Yet again the minister is displaying the complacency which has characterized the Government's attitude all along ●

the chief medical officer. "It is important that these matters are kept in context."

There have always been cases of food poisoning with salmonella. It exists in most other countries as well. We have been doing all we can to reduce this.

"The number of cases to which he refers should be contrasted with the fact that consumers have been eating 30 million a day. The vast majority of people have been eating eggs perfectly safely."

Sir Richard Body (Holland with Boston, C) said that he rejected what Dr Clark had said. There were two external factors over which egg producers had no control.

One was what the feed manufacturers did. So long as some of them put into their compounds bits and pieces of dead animals, surely this could contribute to the problem?

Concern had been expressed by many egg producers, too, about what was going on in the hatcheries and whether certain drugs, used extensively to suppress salmonella and other diseases, were continuing to work. Would the minister consider that urgently, also?

Mr MacGregor said that these matters had been considered urgently.

Protein processing plants had to abide by the conditions. The amount of inspection and monitoring had been increased. Visits by his officials were on a three-month basis.

Mr MacGregor said later that eggs would be destroyed and not recycled.

The Rev Ian Paisley (North Antrim, DUP) said that the industry in Northern Ireland was calamitous though it had a clean bill of health. When Britain joined the EEC the egg industry in Ulster had 10 mil-

lion in the laying flock. Now it was 3.3 million. "It has dived to rock bottom."

One thousand jobs were at stake in Ulster, plus another 2,500 which spun off from the industry. Those who had already culled their flocks should get compensation.

Dr Lewis Moonie (Kirkcaldy, Lab) asked Mr MacGregor if he would accept departmental responsibility for the shameful cover-up which had gone on in this country for years over salmonella in poultry flocks. If not, was he prepared to do the honourable thing, as Mrs Currie had done, and resign?

Mr MacGregor: There has been no cover-up.

Mr Peter Hardy (Wentworth, Lab): Thousands of housewives will already have made their Christmas cakes and used marzipan and icing containing raw eggs. Does he suggest the housewives throw these Christmas cakes away?

Mr MacGregor: Commercial producers of these and also of mayonnaise use pasteurized liquid eggs. Pasturized eggs are safe. They are obliged to do this, so most products are safe and not included in the warning about raw eggs. It is certainly the case that housewives ought to be careful about using raw eggs in the home themselves.

Computer scheme for £1.2bn

The Government's innovative and huge programme to computerize social security administration meant that by mid-1991 most local office work would be computerized, Mr Peter Lloyd, Under Secretary of State for Social Security, said during Commons question time.

He said that the result of this operational strategy would be a considerable reduction in paper records as well as producing more efficient service for customers and better jobs for staff.

In answer to a later question, Mr Lloyd said that in the decade from the start of the programme in 1982, the cost was likely to be about £1.2 billion.

Agencies get more cash

Government grants to British agencies sending volunteers abroad are to rise by 20 per cent next year to a total of £13 million, Mr Christopher Patten, Minister for Overseas Development, said in a written answer.

Voluntary Service Overseas will get a grant of £10.25 million in 1989-90. The Catholic Institute for International Relations will get £1.16 million. International Voluntary Service will get £980,000 and the United Nations Association International Service £605,000.

Co-operation budget

The Government is proposing to increase the British Council's budget for co-operation with the Soviet Union, Mr Robert Jackson, Secretary of State for Education, said in a written answer. A proportion of the funds will be used to strengthen activity in further and higher education.

The University Grants Committee is to inquire into the present and future provision of Soviet and East European studies in this country.

£10m more for Ile

The permitted spending of the Inner London Education Authority (Ile) in 1989-90 is to be raised by £10 million, to £930 million, Mr Kenneth Baker, Secretary of State for Education, said in a written reply.

He had taken into account that this was the authority's last year of operation. The maximum permitted was being set at 77.6p.

Weight check on lorries

About 60,000 lorries were weighed by the traffic examiners in the six months to September, an increase of 80 per cent on last year's level, Mr Peter Bottomley, Under Secretary of State for Transport, said in a written answer. The number of tachograph checks had gone up by nearly 40 per cent.

Parliament today

Commons (2.30): Questions: Education and science; Prime Minister: Social security uprating and re-rating orders. Motion on ministerial and other salaries order. Lords (2.30): Children Bill, committee, second day.

Youth aid demanded by Labour

It was ludicrous to suggest that young people could make lengthy journeys such as from the Western Isles to Inverness or from Redcar to Hartlepool to undertake YTS courses, Miss Marjorie Mowlem (Redcar, Lab) said during exchanges about income support for young people.

Mr Calum Macdonald (Western Isles, Lab) asked that it should be made Government policy to give income support to 16 to 18-year-olds for whom the Government had not found a place on the Youth Training Scheme.

Mr Nicholas Scott, Minister of State for Social Security: No. Mr Macdonald said that a young constituent would have to wait seven months for a YTS place and the minister should restore income support eligibility for youngsters who were willing to work or train and for whom none was available.

Did he agree with Prince Edward that denial of income support could be a blow to wreck a young man's life?

Mr Scott said that the constituent had been offered a place on a Construction Industry Training Board course at Inverness (Labour laughter) — but preferred to wait for a more local course.

It remained an option for him to remain at school.

Rate-support grant settlement

Gummer predicts rate rise of 'only 2%'

Average rate increases in England next year should be only about 2 per cent as a result of the Government's rate-support grant settlement for 1989-90, Mr John Gummer, Minister for Local Government, said in a Commons statement.

The settlement, he said, was good news for local government and for ratepayers.

The main elements of the rate-support grant proposals for 1989-90 were that provision for local authority current expenditure should be £29,140 million; an increase of 8.6 per cent above the 1988-89 settlement. That provision was 4.8 per cent above the amount authorities had budgeted to spend this year and broadly in line with the GDP deflator.

Next year taxpayers would provide £13,575 million in grants towards local authority services. That was £1,100 million more than this year. The amount of grant next year would be increased by 9 per cent.

There had been fewer representations about the settlement this year, which seemed to indicate a broader level of contentment and there had been a widespread welcome for the certainty which the new Rate Support Grant Act provided.

He also announced the easing of restrictions on some local authorities that had been rate-capped.

He had concluded, however, that Camden, which was overpaying by £216 for every adult, did not need to have an increase in its expenditure level. Tower Hamlets could spend £1 million more, provided it established proper financial control.

Greenwich could spend £2 million more, but that would be linked specifically to improved performance on social services, particularly concerning children at risk. Hackney would also be able to spend £2 million more, and Southwark £6 million more, but on condition that they made improvements in their rent collection procedures and other financial matters.

Mr Clive Selley, an Opposition spokesman on housing and local government, said that Mr Gummer cut an unlikely Father Christmas figure. What the statement really meant was that the average unweighted domestic rate bill was likely to exceed £500 in 1989-90.

It was already £468 compared with £131 when Labour left office in 1979 and the figure of £500 was only the average. For those living in Labour and Conservative boroughs who were above that average, the increase would be much more painful.

Why did Mr Gummer bring his office into disrepute by dressing up the figures when it would be more honest to admit



Mr Selley: Minister is an unlikely Father Christmas

that the Government was determined to cut local authority expenditure regardless of the consequences.

The cumulative loss of rate-support grant since 1979 was £22 billion; that was why Conservative and Labour authorities were complaining so bitterly about Government policy.

Would the Government increase the rate-support grant to take into account the estimated increase in inflation from its present 6.4 per cent to 7.0 per cent next year?

In view of the fact that for

four or five years the Government had underestimated the effect of cuts in rate-support grant, had the Government now got its sums right, or would this turn out to be another underestimate?

Last year, the Government had said that rates would come down when in fact in many Conservative areas they had gone up by as much as 40 per cent.

How many local authorities were going to be poll-tax-capped? Was not the truth that the Government was trying to lessen the pain of the poll tax by forcing up rates now in preparation for the introduction of the poll tax?

The Government was continuing its policy of trying to undermine local democracy.

Mr Gummer said that it was hard to take such comments seriously when he was announcing a grant increase of 9 per cent.

If the community charge was being introduced this year, it would be £100 a person more expensive to live in a Labour Conservative area than a Conservative authority.

That was because Labour authorities were in general less efficient than Conservative ones. If the Government was trying to force up rates, it would not be announcing 9 per cent more in grants.

The Government had a

responsibility to control local authority spending. Camden, for example, spent 30 per cent above its needs. "Old, poor, and vulnerable people in Camden are being killed every day by the effects of these rate increases. Unless we hold it down they will find it impossible to pay rates."

Mr Tony Banks (Newham North West, Lab): Did the minister really say that old people are being killed in Camden because of the impact of high rates? I am sure that it is what he said and that he will want to withdraw it. It is a grotesque thing to say about any local authority.

Camden had one of the worst problems in its social services situation and it was not surprising that it could not meet the Government's target. For him to say that they were responsible for killing old people was grotesque and irresponsible and he should withdraw it.

Mr Gummer: I happily withdraw any such imputation. Mr Banks: He said it.

Mr Gummer: I am happy to withdraw it. It is not necessary for him to have that humming and noise. I was using a kind of form, as he well knows. I am saying that Camden is perfectly able to provide proper services at lower cost. It is a badly organized, badly run local authority. That is why it spends 30 per cent more than it ought to.

Bleak holiday 'for nine million'

By Nicholas Wood
Political Correspondent

About nine million people face a bleak Christmas this year because of the common agricultural policy (CAP), rising inflation and benefit cuts, Labour said yesterday after launching a scathing attack on waste and mismanagement in Brussels and London.

Denying the Government's case that the Community's notorious food mountains and wine lakes are shrinking in the wake of the reforms agreed at the Brussels summit in February, the Opposition argued that the problems of surpluses were getting worse and were imposing a growing burden on consumers, especially those struggling to make ends meet.

Drawing on a recent report from the National Consumer Council, which found that the CAP was costing the average family of four £13.50 a week in higher prices and taxes, Mr Gordon Brown, the shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that an extra three million



Mr Brown: Extra three million facing hardship

pensioners, children and adults were facing hardship this Christmas.

"Three million people may not be able to afford Christmas presents or celebrations and around one million children may go without any toys or other gifts."

Mr Brown added that this poorest section of society might not even be able to afford a Christmas dinner, now typically costing £4.

Labour MEPs, who joined Mr Brown at a press conference at Westminster, highlighted what they described as the waste and inefficiency of the CAP.

Mr Barry Seal, leader of the British Labour Group, said: "Whatever the British Government says, the food mountains are continuing to grow."

They released figures showing that last year the fruit and vegetables surplus amounted to 2,600,000 tonnes, most of which was destroyed at the rate of 187lb every second of the year.

According to the latest figures, other surpluses included more

than 10 million tonnes of cereals, 163,000 tonnes of butter, 402,000 tonnes of olive oil, 560,000 tonnes of butter, 39,000 tonnes of tobacco and 9 million hectolitres of alcohol.

Only bad harvests at home and in the United States and the Soviet Union were holding down the size of the grain mountain, they said.

Mr Stan Newens, deputy leader of the group, said that developing countries also suffered from the CAP because much unwanted food was dumped on world markets, so lowering demand for their exports. The EEC is now the biggest sugar exporter in the world, after Cuba.

He called for fundamental reform of the system of farm price support aimed at generating a prosperous farming community without the drawbacks of the present policy.

To emphasize the costs of the CAP, Labour yesterday distributed 100 hampers worth £13.50 apiece to charities for the needy.

Family credit take-up rate nearly 40%, Moore says

The take-up rate of family credit is nearly 40 per cent, Mr John Moore, Secretary of State for Social Security, said at questions.

Mr Frank Field (Birkenhead, Lab), chairman of the Select Committee on Social Services, asked whether the Government would meet its modest objective of a 60 per cent take-up.

Mr Moore said that he was as disappointed as Mr Field by the take-up rate, but spending on the benefit was higher than planned.

He had said that since the start of the scheme more than 450,000 claims had been received. At the end of November more than 250,000 families were receiving family credit with about 47,000 claims in hand.

The underlying case load approached 300,000. Later, Mr Andrew Mitchell (Gedling, C) said that many felt that child benefit, as at present constituted, was not best targeted. Those large sums of

money should go to families and children most in need rather than being spread.

Mr Moore said that it was right to remind the House that, despite the absence of uprating, the Government was spending £4.5 billion on child benefit. It was also right that 70 per cent of that went to families with incomes above average earnings.

Mr Neil Hamilton (Tatten, C) said that most child benefit went to households paying out more in tax than they obtained in benefit.

He could not understand the extraordinary attitude of the Opposition which was opposed to tax cuts on average earnings but was prepared to shower child benefit on the rich.

Mr Moore said that 80 per cent or more of the recipients of benefit were also taxpayers and had benefited more than somewhat.

Mr Robin Cook, chief Opposi-

sition spokesman on social security, said that in the lifetime of this Government, successive chancellors had raised the married man's tax allowance by 22 per cent, while successive chancellors had reduced social security and child benefit by 13 per cent.

By what process of logic did the cost of maintaining a wife had gone up by a fifth, while that of looking after a child had gone down by an eighth?

Mr Moore said that it was inconceivable that the Opposition should have the temerity even to make a comparison between the record on child benefit of their Government when in office and the record of the present Government.

In only one out of sixty-two years had the Labour Government, in its help for families with children, come anywhere near the complete record of the present Government.

SPECTRUM

Helping yourself to the future



PART 2

After years of despair and official neglect, some of the people of our inner cities are finding that the answers to their

problems can be found in their own hands. Colin Ward examines the success of housing co-operatives — and the suspicions of the politicians

Ray Gosling was interviewing citizens of Chester, among the boutiques and wine bars in The Rows in the centre of that city. "But where do the poor people live?" he asked. "Oh, out there," he was told, with an arm pointing in the general direction of the Lache estate. "We call them the Reservations."

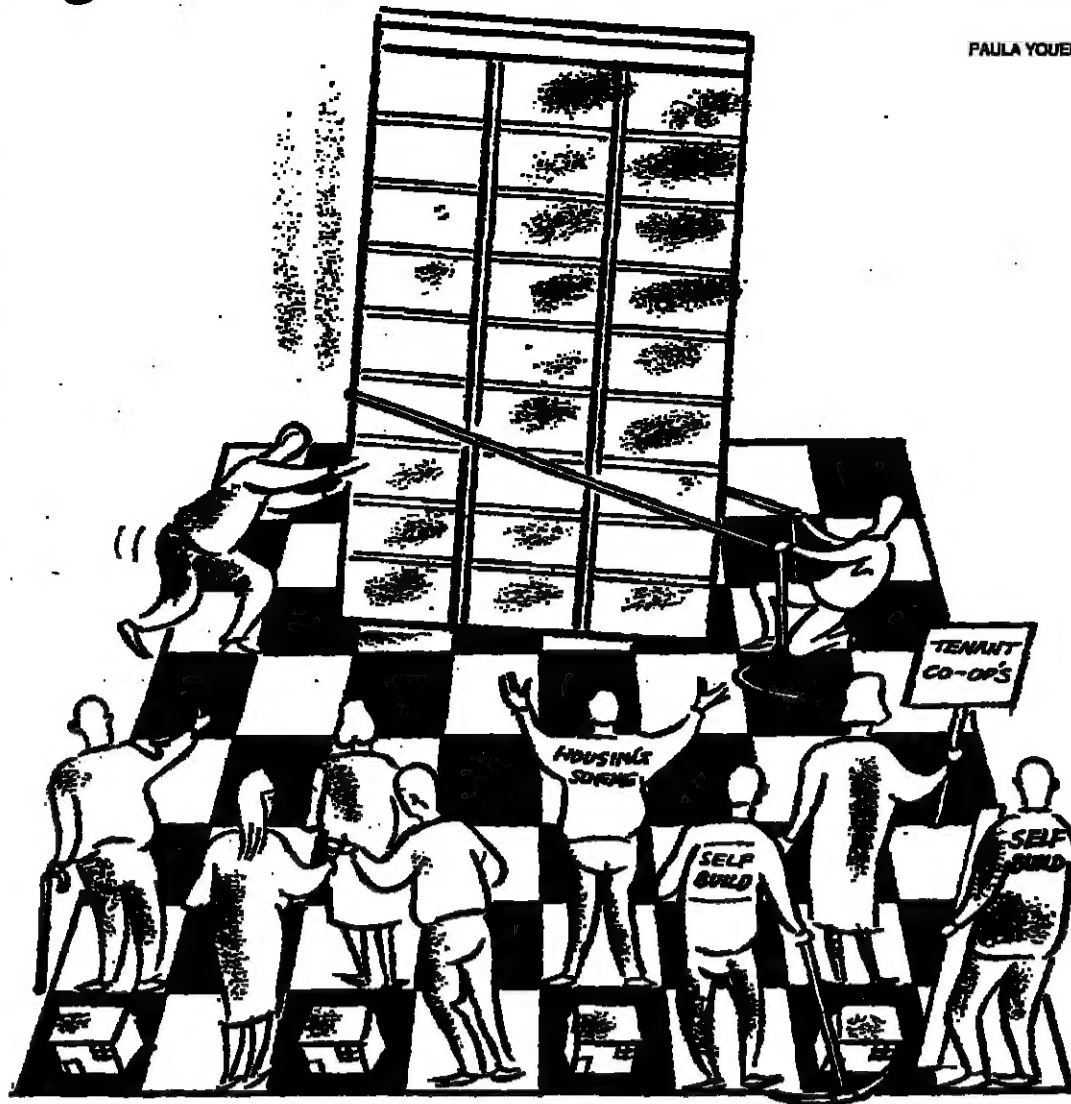
No one has been willing to come out to me with the statement that people with low incomes and no chance of a mortgage have no right to occupy valuable space in the city, possibly because, as a legacy from the past, so many do.

I have lived long enough to have seen the transitory triumphs of two opposed ideologies in city housing. When I was young the advocates of comprehensive redevelopment rejoiced that bombing had provided opportunities that would not have arisen in decades of slum clearance. When they ran out of bomb sites, following the ideology of race and rise, they created their own bomb sites.

Nobody cared to listen in the Fifties and Sixties, and even in the Seventies, when the cash was still swilling around in the urban renewal bran-tub, to those who pointed to the grotesque paradox

that a line drawn on a map in town and county halls (verified by a clerk in the passenger seat of a moving car, ticking off numbers so that the closure orders would be correctly addressed) selected one side of whole streets for demolition while identical houses on the other side were slowly beginning their upward spiral, aided by the merry whirl of Black and Decker, into the sought-after end of the housing market. A comparison of the prices that the rescued houses fetch today with the sad condition of the estates opposite is instructive in pondering the conclusion reached by Graham Lomas, deputy strategic planner for the GLC 15 years ago, that in London more fit houses had been destroyed by public authorities since the war than had been replaced.

It was inevitable, therefore, that the pendulum of opinion should have swung against the direct provision of local authority rented housing. But the current mood is equally dangerous and destructive. Talk to politicians and they ignore not just the destitute people living rough, but also the low-paid employed who are hanging on to a low-paid job as an alternative to unemployment, and are quite unable to find a slot in the housing market. They, and we, are trapped



between two theoretical attitudes which do not relate to the facts.

Fortunately, there are in British cities a whole series of small but successful examples of approaches which ought to be acceptable on both sides of the political divide because they exemplify dweller control (something taken for granted by the owner-occupier) as the first principle of housing.

In London, where the pressure on housing land is greatest, the Lewisham Self-Build Housing Society, sponsored by one vote of the borough council, housed themselves in light-weight but high-quality houses on sites too small or awkward for the council to use. It took years of argument with the planners, the district surveyor and even the inland

Revenue, yet members tell me that the whole experience has changed their lives.

On the South Bank, after years of manoeuvring in the face of plans for commercial development, members of the Mulberry Housing Co-op at Coin Street have at last moved into their houses, around a green square, and with public access to the riverside, reclaiming for ordinary, civilized purposes a site which I have seen derelict and empty ever since the last war.

In Hull, Gloscope, a group of formerly unemployed young people, are successfully rehabilitating old houses for the homeless young, including themselves. In Bristol the Zenzele Self-Build Housing Society, consisting of 12

young people, unemployed and mostly black, have not only housed themselves, but have gained the skills to support themselves in new ventures.

Glasgow, which I would once have seen as the most paternalist of housing authorities in Britain, has adopted a policy of sponsoring tenant co-operatives, sometimes heavily handedly, but sometimes with outstanding results. The former director of housing there declared a couple of years ago: "Our greatest resource is not council houses, but the tenants. The potential is there, waiting to be released."

He was absolutely right, and I am sorry that he did not stay longer to help release it, for I learned from Glasgow tenants that

'You conclude that politicians do not trust ordinary citizens with the task of hiring an architect, finding a site and then convincing funding agencies of their probity'

they looked to Liverpool for their inspiration.

In that city, tenant co-operatives began in the early Seventies as a buy-out from private landlords who had showed themselves unwilling and unable to rehabilitate their streets of sub-standard housing. By the end of the decade, aspirations for housing co-ops in Liverpool had been raised further, thanks to the existence of secondary co-ops to steer members through the quagmires of incomprehensible legislation. It happened at Hesketh Street and it happened at the award-winning Weller Streets Housing Co-operative in Liverpool 8. After years of struggle, it has also happened in Vauxhall, which has been showered with awards. The chairman, Tony McGann, is explicit: "Housing is just the beginning. We are making jobs, too."

But at the same time there has also been bizarre political posturing behind the scenes. In Liverpool, housing co-operatives were favoured by central government but, until recently, bitterly opposed by the city council. In Glasgow they were energetically promoted by the city council with the absolute opposition of central government. The complex political reasons behind the posture adopted by councils and ministers were just one more crushing burden on the citizens whose lives have been changed by the adventure of housing themselves. Yet housing co-operatives are blessed in the policy statements of all political parties.

If you take a long-term view you are bound to conclude that politicians do not trust ordinary, ill-housed citizens with the task of hiring an architect, finding a site and then convincing funding agencies of their probity and credit-worthiness.

Every initiative I have mentioned has been faced with heart-breaking delays because the normal system of housing provision, whether public or private, is not geared to direct action by people on low incomes.

The result is that a handful of activists, familiar with the Byzantine complexity of housing law, have had to find the chinks and loopholes which will allow direct control of their own housing, so that they can become normal and natural city dwellers.

Colin Ward, the author of this series, is the winner of the first Charles Douglas-Horne Memorial Trust Award, instituted to commemorate the Editor of The Times from 1982 to 1988. Ward received the award for research into the revival of Britain's inner cities; he travelled to the United States and Italy as well as throughout Britain, and the resulting book, *Welcomes, Thinner City*, from which this series is adapted, will be published by Bedford Square Press in September 1989.

TOMORROW

Death by a thousand cuts: How Britain took the heart and the jobs out of its inner cities by killing small industry, and how the Italians have found the answers

When the Bridge Park Centre is officially opened today, it will be a tribute to the vision of one man, Andro Linklater reports

There is no precedent in Britain for someone such as Leonard Johnson. It has always been to the United States that one has turned for that extreme example of triumph over social circumstance — the black street thief who quits crime and then shows such strength of character and raw power of leadership that he ends up in charge of a multi-million pound organization.

Yet Leonard Johnson, a Londoner and the child of Jamaican parents, has done just that. Little more than a decade ago, he was sent to prison for theft. This morning, as chairman of the £5 million Bridge Park Centre in the Borough of Brent, he will greet the Prince of Wales when he declares the centre officially open.

"It wouldn't matter in what circumstances you met him, you would know he was remarkable," says Richard Gutch, assistant director of the National Council of Voluntary Organizations. "He can relate directly to the most disaffected youngster on a council estate, and just as directly to a government minister or even Margaret Thatcher. In the end, you have to use the word charismatic to describe him."

Johnson, a lean, husky-voiced 30-year-old, has been the moving spirit behind a project which ministers claim represents a new stage in the development of inner city communities. Instead of relying almost entirely on public funds, it is hoped that Bridge Park can serve as a model for community enterprises which generate their own funds, and

engage in entrepreneurial activity for local people.

The site was once a London Transport bus depot, in an area surrounded by railway lines, the North Circular road and grey slabs of 1960s council estates.

Stonebridge, the largest of these, houses almost 10,000 people, predominantly black (more than half the population of Brent came from the ethnic minorities, and it has the largest black population in Europe). "It's very easy to give up hope here," Johnson says. "I used to think there was nothing for black people in this country. We were rats in a ghetto, kept there by the whites."

In 1981, when there were riots in Brixton and Toxteth, there seemed every possibility that Brent would go the same way, with trouble centred on Stonebridge. Indeed, on one occasion, police were lined up opposite a mob carrying axes, clubs and rocks. What stopped the expected arson and looting was the intervention of community leaders, including Johnson and his friend, Lawrence Fearon.

Johnson recalls: "We said to them: 'Whose houses are going to burn? Whose shops will get smashed up? It's not white people who will get hurt in a riot, we're the ones who will suffer.' We understood their feelings, but we said there must be a different way, there is a different way."

The way they envisaged was Christian self-help. During his spell in prison, Johnson had taken to reading the Bible "to



Building the future: Leonard Johnson, at Bridge Park Centre

mock it and show it up as a hoax". Instead, he was converted. When he came out, he took a job as a bricklayer and spent his spare time taking his message to the drug addicts and the shebeens (illegal drinking shops) on the Stonebridge estate. Some of those who are now his friends remember hiding behind pub counters when "the mad preacher" came in, but there

were usually some people prepared to let him have five minutes to get the message over. It was always the same: "There is no point blaming others for the state we are in, we have to stand up and work it out for ourselves. Each of us has something useful to teach, and each of us wants to learn — so let's help each other."

Eventually a small group including Fearon, helped him

set up what became known as the Harlesden People's Community Centre to run a club in a basement car park where these ideals could be put into practice. Their meetings were often broken up by angry drug dealers, but they had enough street credibility to keep the estate calm during the summer of 1981. It was the autumn of that year when the Stonebridge Bus Garage came up for sale. For a group of penniless youths, the price tag of £1.8 million should have put the project far beyond their wildest dreams, but it is a measure of Johnson's sense of purpose that a video made at the time showed him walking through the empty concrete shell of the depot, describing the training facilities, restaurant, gymnasium and business units that he wanted built, and then with an expansive gesture saying, "we'll take out the pillars and raise the roof so that we can have a sports hall".

A feasibility study described these dreams as "quite unrealistic", but Richard Gutch, then assistant to Brent's chief executive, remembered the personal impression created by Johnson and Fearon when they put up the idea. He says: "It wasn't so much the project we thought worth supporting, as the group of people who put it forward."

In May 1982, Brent, together with the Greater London Council and the Department of the Environment put up the necessary money, and the HPCC took possession of their derelict property. It has taken a further six years and £3.3 million

to transform it into today's Bridge Park Centre, which is used by over 6,000 people a week. In keeping with the original ideas, it consists of a massive sports arena seating 1,200 people, units for 32 small businesses, a nursery, a theatre, a restaurant and bar. Public funds made Bridge Park possible, but what gives the project its particular character is the sense of individual enterprise. It was a construction company, a training company, and an enterprise centre, and plans to set up a housing association to take advantage of future redevelopment in Brent.

"In the next 20 years, there will be £600 million spent on

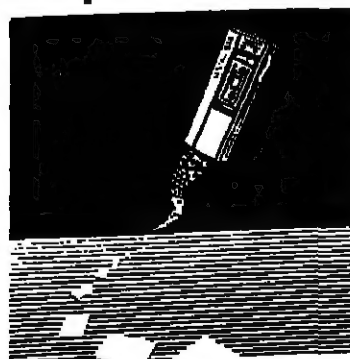
public development in Brent," Mike Wilson, the centre's manager, points out. "Bridge Park will play a major role in ensuring that as much as possible of that money goes back to local people. When the council privatizes its services, we intend to be in a position to bid for them."

It is this attitude which has brought a trail of ministers to an area which they would normally categorize as the preserve of the "loony left". Johnson himself does not deny the Thatcherite implications. "I believe people have got to get up and do it for themselves," he insists. "If Mrs Thatcher says that, she is right. You can't expect people

to do it for you."

Others point out that however deserving the HPCC were, Bridge Park still needed massive public investment to get started. Yet the measure of their achievement is that they persuaded such people to give the money at all. The failure of government to back similar projects in the past has helped to confirm the impression that black people lacked enterprise. Yet as Wilson points out, it was the spirit of enterprise and an urge to better themselves that brought their parents to Britain in the first place. In short, Bridge Park's real significance may be as a message of hope to other black communities.

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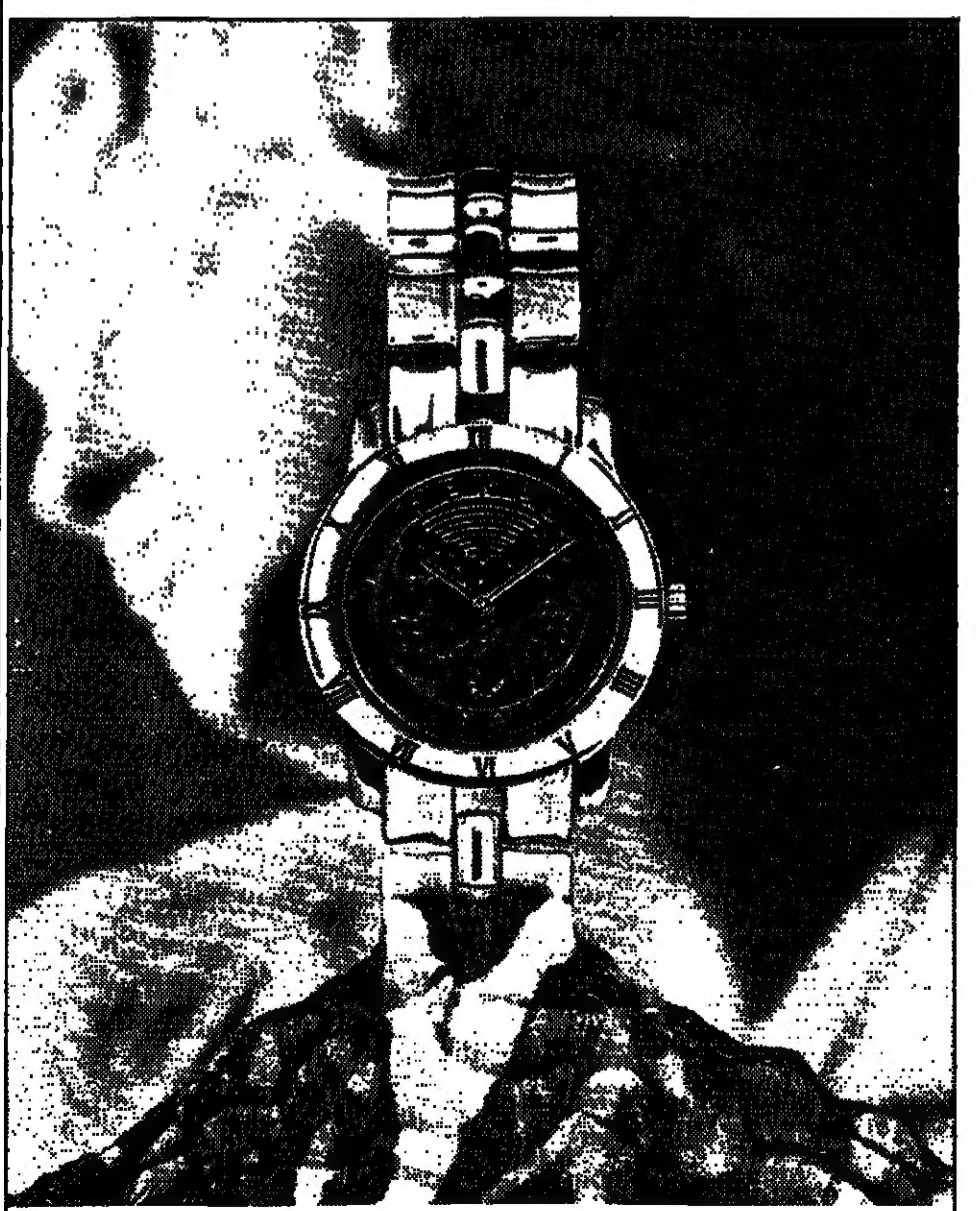
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TIMES DIARY

DAVID WALKER

The Earl of Caithness is one of those Upper House workhorses whose junior ministerial brief takes in housing and the disposal of noxious wastes. And what he does not know about wastes now, he surely soon will. UK Nirex, nuclear waste disposers to the nation, are about to tell his colleagues in the Energy department that a jolly good site for dumping "low-level" radioactive waste is on Atomic Energy Authority land at Dounreay, in the far north of Scotland. A mine is envisaged, though the engineers say its tunnels would have to extend outside the authority's territory underneath land belonging to a certain Scottish earl. The Earl of Caithness, no less.

A year ago the Department of Trade and Industry changed. It got a new logo, a new charter and, Lord Young pushing and shoving, a new subtitle: the Department of Enterprise. One thing that did not change was, arguably, the one thing that would change the department's character, its senior staff. Lord Young, it turns out, is content to let Civil Service rhythms work themselves out, so the top team has remained in place. Until now, that is, for word has it that two of the department's deputy secretaries are moving on, creating a gap in the promotions structure through which (it is said) acolytes of the enterprise culture lower down the department stand ready to pour.

In his new book *Whitehall*, out in the New Year, Peter Hennessy collects various adjectives that have been applied to the Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, Sir Peter Middleton, the chap who would have been Civil Service top dog if the chap from Harrow had not been appointed in his stead. Such as raffish, mercurial, roguish... He certainly lived up to roguish at the launch the other day of Her Majesty's Stationery Office as an "executive agency". The HMSO comes under his departmental responsibilities, and unlike the other officials in evidence (and the recent junior minister, Peter Lilley), Middleton seemed determined to extract some amusement from the occasion. This consisted of *ad hoc* one-liners and some vaudeville routines with his former subordinate, now his brother-in-law, Peter Kemp, who is in charge of the whole agencies initiative: "Peter, over to you." "Not me, Peter, you Peter." Who said civil servants are dour?

BARRY FANTONI



Remind me, does that mean he's going to the polls without Heffer and Bess?

Tonight the head prefect himself sets out to present a new, user-friendly face to the world when, for the first time since he became head of the Home Civil Service, Sir Robin Butler gives an extended interview. The programme, made by Brook Productions for BBC2, shows the limits of the television producer's art when it comes to Whitehall. The week has been much better a radio feature, which would have spared viewers the obligatory "setting scene" for Whitehall consisting of guards marching and geese clapping in St James's Park.

Sir Robin, as you might expect, exudes his famous boyish charm. "Silken and sinuous?" "Clever and Machiavellian?" Never! He uses the interview shamelessly to communicate as much with his fellow officials as with the outer world, putting over a message of reassurance, especially on the touchy questions of Ponting-style conscience and alleged political favouritism. The most amusing segment in the film is when the cameras are allowed a two-minute glimpse of the fabled weekly meeting of permanent secretaries: the Whitehall video recorders will have their freeze-frame buttons pressed more than once as junior officials try to decode something from the seating plan... Peter Kemp, who manages the new executive agencies project, at Butler's immediate left, the club's only woman, Dame Anne Mueller, two seats on his right; Geoffrey Holland of Employment directly opposite - and why that reassuring pat on the shoulder and conspiratorial word in the ear for Sir Gordon Manzie of the Property Services Agency as the meeting starts?

Interviewer Sue Cameron makes her mark right at the very end when she asks the Harrovian and Oxford rugby blue whether his entire career hasn't been a competitive sport in which he has now carried off first prize. He gives the English public school-boy's answer - sport for a Sunday field; in real life, he has just glided, never seeking to win. The fact is, he is patently sincere in saying that, but with those words he distances himself as far as he possibly can from the spirit which the Prime Minister has been talking about for the past nine years. People in Mrs Thatcher's Britain, Sir Robin, are meant to struggle for life's glittering prizes.

Entries are being sought for the 1989 David Watt memorial prize, established by RTZ, the international mining company, to commemorate the writer whose work graced this page until his tragic death in March 1987. The prize, worth £2,000, is open to writers in newspapers and magazines on international and political affairs. The 1988 prize went to Edward Mortimer, writer of the decline of socialism in Western Europe. Details are available from the administrator, the David Watt Memorial Prize, RTZ Ltd, 6 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LD.

The result of yesterday's presidential election in Sri Lanka will not stop the fear and the killing, or solve the island's essential problem: the racial hatred between the Sinhalese, who claim to be descended from north Indian Aryan stock, and the minority, Dravidian Tamils.

Despite the paradoxical nature of the island, the two peoples have been at war with each other for more than two thousand years. The history of Sri Lanka is one of battles and treachery and, in the British colonial period was but a brief interlude.

The Sinhalese saw independence from Britain as an opportunity to be free of the domination not simply of the European invader but also of the wily Tamil, who had ingrained himself with the colonial power by learning English and administration, and whose principal industry was government. A greedy political class grew, each member of which sought to outbid the other for short-term popular power by appealing to chauvinist ethnic interests.

Thus S.D.W.R. Bandaranaike passed a law making Sinhala the only official language. But when he entered into a pact with the Tamil leadership, he was undercut by determined opposition from J.R. Jayewardene, then leader of a rival party. Bandaranaike was in fact assassinated by a Buddhist extremist,

who believed he had given too much away to the Tamils. His widow, Sirima, who stepped into his political place, has been careful not to make the same mistake and has constantly opposed the accommodations that President Jayewardene himself has been compelled to make with the Tamils.

In the meantime the Tamils were reduced from arrogantly demanding 50 per cent of the country's power and patronage to fighting for their very existence against a murderously peripatetic army. Political power within the Tamil community passed from the traders and landowners of upper-caste Jaffna society to the fishermen, who historically had been excluded from influence but who now took up the gun and so seized leadership of the community.

Patronized by Mrs Gandhi in India, especially after the spasm of killing and burning of Tamils in southern Sri Lanka in July 1983, the Tamil rebels rapidly gained control of the densely populated northern peninsula and became a major influence

throughout the east as well. President Jayewardene was forced to yield step by step by the intransigence of the Tamil gunmen and by increasing pressure from Rajiv Gandhi, who wanted an end to a campaign which he rightly felt brought no credit to India.

The Indian prime minister was also happy to send his troops into the north and east of Sri Lanka to defend the Tamil population, with whom his own 50 million Tamils felt a certain kinship, from the Sinhalese.

The leader of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, Velupillai Prabhakaran, made his organization the leading rebel group by killing off rival outfits. When Gandhi thought to force him into accepting less than the independence of the north and east for which he had fought, he turned on the Indians themselves. So far the Indians have lost 700 men to Prabhakaran's guns and bombs.

The Indians, with something like 50,000 men on the island, have been able to impose a political settlement on the north

and east with the election of a provincial council run by the present chief rival to the Tigers, the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front. But the EPRLF exists only behind the Indian barbed wire, and under the protection of the Indian main force. The moment the Indians withdraw, the Tigers will once more take control, and the Sri Lankan armed forces simply do not have the manpower or technical ability to hold them down.

It might have been possible for the north and east to have settled into some kind of no-peace-no-war semi-autonomy under benevolent Indian supervision. But the necessary leadership was lacking. The Sri Lankan Freedom Party of Mrs Bandaranaike opposed, each step of the way, the concessions that President Jayewardene made to Tamil aspirations. She vehemently opposed the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, which allowed the establishment of provincial councils and the presence of Indian troops.

Mrs Bandaranaike even found

herself able to enter some kind of arrangement with the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), the revolutionary Marxist organization which in 1971 she had put down with bloody ruthlessness (and with the help of the Indian army).

The JVP has since switched from pure Marxism to Sinhala chauvinism. It appears to dispossessed lower-caste Sinhalese who are resentful at years of domination by the agricultural and landowning caste to which virtually all Sri Lankan political leaders belonged.

Over the past six months the JVP has brought economic ruin to the country, preventing the functioning of the industries, the agri-businesses, and the tourism on which the country depends. Government itself has ground to a halt. No government will be able to operate without either coming to terms with or destroying the JVP.

The first course means at least unravelling the Indo-Sri Lankan accord, which might well be thwarted by the Indians. They will have no wish to pull out,

leaving undone the task they have set themselves, and to which they have already committed so much blood. The latter course means embarking on a long, bitter anti-guerrilla campaign which the armed forces are by no means certain to win. It also means a Sinhalese government waging war on its own population in the south, which is not a situation that can bring any sort of comfort to yesterday's election winner.

The new president may wish to ally the government with the Sinhalese chauvinism whipped up by the JVP, and in that case will want to remove the apparatus of local autonomy so painfully negotiated over the past five years. A better course, however, would be to marginalize the JVP, by using the so far loyal military apparatus to hunt down the guerrilla forces. At the same time a series of compromises on the political front over such matters as the provincial councils (outside the north and east), the composition of the cabinet and the revival of regeneration of industry and commerce, should be attempted to unify Sinhalese opinion.

The Indians will have to be left in the north and east, since Sri Lanka's own army cannot cope, and Prabhakaran must not be allowed to reassert himself. Sinhalese pride will have to be made to swallow this bitter pill. The outlook is bleak.

Michael Hamlyn on the impossible task of governing Sri Lanka

State of constant turmoil

Hermione Parker

The meanest trap of all

Of all the myths currently going the rounds, none is more perverse than that of "targeting". The word is being used to describe those social security benefits which are means-tested. According to the myth they alone are fair and they alone avoid waste. All of which is untrue.

National insurance and child benefits were introduced, in Britain as elsewhere, precisely in order to "target" benefits to those groups most likely to be at risk of poverty (the old, the sick, families with children and the unemployed) without subjecting them to the indignities and disincentive effects of the means test. A debate is urgently needed to decide the best way of withdrawing such benefits. Instead, the public is being confused by misuse of terminology and over-simplification of the issues.

Means-tested welfare is being hard-sold to the electorate, as if there were no limitations to its usefulness. To overcome traditional hostility to the means test, the Department of Social Security euphemistically refers to income support, family credit and the new housing benefit as "income-related" benefits, although each is subject to a test of capital as well as income. It is part of a campaign to bring about a new type of society in which a means-tested safety net will look after the minority in demonstrable need, while the rest look after themselves, paying less tax and encouraged to save by means of income tax relief.

Quite apart from ethical and social arguments for and against a means-tested welfare state, there are important practical considerations. The case in favour rests heavily on three assumptions, each highly suspect: first, that it is technically possible to hit the moving target of those in genuine need promptly and efficiently; and to avoid those who are not; second, that the initial savings will, eventually, outweigh the disincentive effects of means-tested welfare (Why work? Why save? Why marry?); third, that it is possible to control a poverty programme swollen by

millions whose poverty is tax-induced (five million extra because of poll tax alone), without the introduction of draconian liability-to-maintain laws and compulsory workfare.

Sometimes I wonder if those who put so much faith in means-tested welfare have any idea of how the families they are supposed to be "targeting" actually live. When government ministers talk about targeting they mean benefits for the poorest, yet one of the main characteristics of extreme poverty is uncertainty and constant change. Incomes change from week to week. Family members come and go. Keeping track of all those changes is impossible. Even now, it is unlikely that all those drawing family credit really need it, since it is awarded for six months at a time. On the other hand, most families thought to be entitled are not claiming it. For those who do claim means-tested assistance, there are the queues, the constantly engaged telephones, the lost GPs and the fraud squads.

The beauty of child benefit is its reliability and unconditionality. While family credit gives poor families money but takes away their autonomy, child benefit is a base on which they can build without outside interference, giving them a small measure of the economic independence they yearn for. Rich families will hardly notice the loss of child benefit, even middle-income families will survive it, but the poor will suffer terribly. More will drop out of the regular labour market. More will bend the rules.

Means-tested benefits destroy self-reliance and self-esteem. Some ministers make excuses for the poverty and unemployment traps, saying they are the result of kindly governments trying to help the poor. In fact, most of the working poor would not need help if they were not over-taxed in the first place. Norman Fowler, when Social Services Secretary, rationalized the benefit system but could not restore incentives because the problem is one of tax as well as benefits.



Forty years ago a couple with two children paid no net tax (income tax minus family allowance) until the father earned the equivalent (at 1988 incomes) of about £250 a week. Today they pay more in tax than they receive in child benefit once the father earns £137. Each time child benefit is frozen, more families are drawn into family credit. Tax is charged at the same time as family credit is being withdrawn. Spending power from a wage of £140 a week is only about £10 more than on unemployment benefit.

Lonely parents are the worst affected. In London a lone mother may have to pay £100 a

week rent, of which only about half will count for housing benefit. After paying her rent she has almost nothing to live on. If she takes a job she cannot put her child-care costs against tax. So unless she earns £200 a week, her only real option is to stay on unemployment benefit and work in the black economy while her children are asleep.

The Achilles' heel of new liberalism is the fast-growing subculture of welfare dependency - fewer than three million claiming supplementary benefit in 1975, nearly five million today, and all the extra accounted for by people of working age. About 30 per cent of the

population (including dependents) are getting means-tested benefits of one sort or another and a further 10 per cent are probably entitled but not claiming. Once poll tax starts to bite, the total will approach the 50 per cent mark - an extraordinary way to revive Victorian values.

Experience, worldwide, shows the impossibility of administering means-tested welfare on a large scale with humanity and efficiency. By international standards British income support is extremely humane. Elsewhere the assessment unit is often three-generational and there is much more stigma. In Germany, for instance, where contributory

benefits are much higher, social assistance is used sparingly, the bill for it is sent to the nearest liable relative (or household member), and many people are too ashamed to claim it.

Those who favour "targeted" benefits want them restricted to the "really poor", but are not prepared to face the implications of what they preach. It is extraordinary how little attention is paid to the problem of cost control. When the Government says means-tested benefits cost less than universal ones, you can be sure they have used a tax/benefit computer model which takes no account of behavioural change.

Although no one can give figures, common sense tells us that a benefit withdrawn £ for £ (like income support) has a much greater disincentive effect than a benefit awarded on grounds of age or disability and withdrawn at 25p in the £ through income tax. Experience worldwide confirms this assumption. Always it is the loosely controlled, means-tested benefit programmes that cause most concern, not the tightly controlled ones, nor the contributory benefits.

Of course some degree of means-tested welfare will always be necessary. The point at issue is the scale of dependence upon it and the consequences that flow from it. One possibility is to reduce dependence on means-tested benefits by lifting the lower paid, especially families with children, out of tax altogether. Initially this would involve some redistribution from rich to poor, but in the long term all should benefit.

Alternatively, we can continue down the road to a residual welfare state, in which case it is only a matter of time before government will be forced to impose compulsory workfare and much stricter liability-to-maintain laws, as in Victorian times. This effect needs to be spelt out.

The author is a specialist in tax and social security. Her book *Instead of the Dole* will be published by Routledge early next year.

Commentary • TIM CONGDON

Burns' morning after

Has the Thatcher government's economic strategy been continuous since it first came to power? And has it been a success?

A conference organized just over a year ago by the National Economic Development Office gave Sir Terence Burns, the Government's chief economic adviser, the opportunity to answer these questions. The conference volume, *Keynes and Economic Policy*, has just been published and contains a paper by Sir Terence on the medium-term financial strategy. The strategy (MTFS), was introduced - largely because of his advocacy - in 1980. Many economists regard it as the antithesis of Keynesianism.

The point of the MTFS was to pre-commit the Government, several years ahead, to reductions in monetary growth and public sector borrowing. In this way policy would be both anti-inflationary in effect and consistent in application. If all went well, not only would the rate of inflation fall, but also the growth of demand and output would be more stable than it had been during the stop-go cycles of the 1950s and 1960s.

Sir Terence's paper demonstrates convincingly that all did go well for a time. The MTFS had painful teething troubles in 1980 and 1981, when a severe recession caused the sharpest increase in unemployment since the war. But thereafter the numbers came right. Indeed, the years 1982-87 were virtually a golden age in macroeconomic

management. As is well known, inflation did fall. The increase in the gross domestic product deflator (a more comprehensive measure of inflation than the retail price index) dropped from 18.6 per cent in 1980/81 to 3.3 per cent in 1986/87. It is less well known, but perhaps more relevant to an intellectual challenge to the old Keynesian consensus, that the economy also became more stable. The fluctuations of output growth around its average value were significantly less in 1982-87 than in any other five-year period since 1957.

The great improvement in economic performance is both a clear endorsement of the idea of a medium-term strategy and a striking tribute to the skill with which it was implemented. Sir Terence undoubtedly deserves high praise for his contribution to policy-formation in the early 1980s.

But, when he moves on to consider more recent and present policy, the exercise in self-congratulation goes too far. In the conclusion to his paper, Sir Terence asserts that the MTFS, "as it continues to be pursued today, is identifiably the same as it was at the outset". Despite a gradual evolution "in presentation" and substance, particularly in "the technicalities of the assessment of monetary conditions", the strategy is - in his view - "very much intact".

Sir Terence's problem is that the economy has misbehaved badly since he delivered his paper to the Nedo conference.

The stability of the mid-1980s has been ruptured by a boom fully comparable, in its abruptness and scale, to the booms of the stop-go era.

The Government failed utterly to anticipate how vigorously the boom would be. In a sudden reversal of policy, it was forced to raise interest rates by almost 100 per cent between May and November. Had it not done so, the decisions of late 1985 as being concerned only with "technicalities in the assessment of monetary conditions".

As Lawson correctly stated eight years ago, broad money targets were intended as the "centrepiece". As he ought to concede now, the wildly excessive growth rates of credit and broad money in 1986 and 1987 were the main forces behind the boom over which he has presided. The current acceleration in inflation, like all its predecessors, is the consequence of discontinuity and irresponsibility in monetary policy. It would be quite wrong for anyone in officialdom now to argue that monetary policy has remained continuous and responsible in the last few years.

In his introductory reflections at the Nedo conference, Lawson remarked: "People know in their bones not merely the immense economic and social harm that accelerating inflation is likely to inflict, but also how difficult and painful it is to bring it under control once it has been allowed to take off." Quite so.

you like, monetarist - strategy. For this reason the centrepiece of the strategy is a medium-term monetary target, to which we are committed."

It was while broad money targets were in force that the MTFS achieved its key successes; it is since they have been abandoned that these successes have been placed in jeopardy. Sir Terence cannot downplay the decisions of late 1985 as being concerned only with "technicalities in the assessment of monetary conditions".

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DEC 20 ON THIS DAY 1910

The Houndsditch crime was the murder of three policemen by a group of Russian (Polish so-called) anarchists on December 16. Two of them were later discovered in a house in Sydney Street where they were killed during the famous siege.

THE ALIEN IMMIGRANT

(From A Correspondent)

The problem of the alien immigrant has been brought vividly before the public mind by the Houndsditch crime. There are centres in which the different nationalities are fairly well partitioned off, one from another, not only in London, but in Manchester, Leeds, and other great cities. It is, however, with London that the public is chiefly concerned, and with the almost destitute aliens who come from Eastern Europe, St George's-in-the-East is more the habitat of the alien now than Whitechapel, and the Russian and Polish Jews predominate. This is recognized to the extent that Yiddish is employed for many official and other notices.

The worst characters live in the neighbourhood of Grove-street and Backchurch-lane. It was within a stone's throw of the former that two aliens in Rupert-street not many months ago. From this district come many of the foreign women who nightly visit the West-end. Among the men are many who have come to this country to evade their obligation of military service. There was a great num-

ber of these during the Russo-Japanese War. They had a military bearing, and their physical condition was much superior to that of the men who had been admitted as immigrants since that time. Many of them passed on to the Colonies, the United States, and the Argentine Republic. The foreign criminal is not as a rule a well-developed man.

There is a regular trade among the foreigners for the admission of their competitors. Arrangements are made in advance by which these worthless, penniless, and often worthless persons are enabled to slip through the meshes of the Aliens Act. They are attracted here because of their knowledge that it is a free country, and by the glowing accounts sent to them by their friends and relations who are already established here. Once they have arrived, they are taken to the sweating tailor or those who make cheap furniture, and they work for almost their bare maintenance in order to scrape a few shillings together and to learn English. The children learn English very quickly, and they are, as a rule, fairly well nurtured.

There is one thing in their favour. The ordinary alien is a hard worker and moderate as far as drink is concerned. But he is a born gambler. Horse-racing is closely followed not only by the men but by the women, and the bookmakers secure a rich harvest in penny, twopenny, and other small bets. If they are successful in saving any money they leave the East-end and go into other districts where they will be free from their original associates, and they in turn begin employing other immigrants on terms as meagre and oppressive as those under which they themselves had to begin.



1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone: 01-782 5000

OPEN FOR HELP

For nearly two weeks one of the 15 republics of the Soviet Union has been more visible to the world outside than any part of the country has been since the 1920s. While international rescue teams have been working alongside Soviet troops and civilians in the search for survivors of the Armenian earthquake, the usual formalities — visas for people and documentation for cargo — have been reduced to a minimum.

The Soviet and foreign media, a group whose motives have been regarded as particularly suspect in the past, have been welcomed — and not as admiring observers of a model relief operation, but as chroniclers, critics and communicators. The Soviet State, which liked to regard itself as needing nothing, has accepted foreign assistance on a huge scale, and expressed gratitude for it.

Many reasons can be advanced for this sudden beneficial change in official attitudes. It would, for instance, have seemed hypocritical for the Soviet Union not to accept foreign aid after President Gorbachev's address to the UN General Assembly, with its recurring theme that we all inhabit the same world.

Nor is the new openness entirely disinterested. Having taken the decision to accept outside help, the Soviet authorities could further their cause by making the full horror of the catastrophe known as widely as possible.

The fact that the earthquake struck in Armenia may also have contributed. Armenians have their own long cultural tradition of openness towards and interest in the rest of the world. Individual Armenians have often taken a more casual and more realistic approach to Soviet regulations, whether on internal travel or economic management, than have the Slavs to the north.

Armenian emigres are part of a well established diaspora which maintains ties with the home country in a way that has not been open to Russian emigres. News of the earthquake and its aftermath would inevitably have spread abroad. It would not have been possible to keep the disaster a state and

military secret, like the Askaniya earthquake of 1948. Whatever the reasons for it, the acceptance of foreign help and the free rein given to foreign rescue teams in the disaster area, marks a significant shift. The question now must be whether it will be maintained and extended to the rest of the Soviet Union.

Much will depend on how the Soviet leadership reads the balance sheet. By all accounts, the decision to open the disaster area and restrict the formalities was made by President Gorbachev himself. He should be well pleased. The television pictures of the destruction and the plight of the victims have generated a massive flow of help, from medicine and medical equipment which the Soviet Union badly needs, to skilled rescue workers and money in foreign exchange that will assist the reconstruction work.

No less important, the openness has also generated immeasurable good will. The attempt by the Soviet authorities to keep the Chernobyl accident secret only reinforced western suspicions and minimized sympathy. The benefits of openness are now visible.

The international response to the disaster has had other effects as well, which might in the long term prove even more far reaching. Reports of the technical superiority of western relief teams and their specialized training will have brought home to many people in the Soviet Union how advanced technologically the West is and how comparatively well prepared it is for the unforeseen. Such information about the outside world was until recently accessible only to an elite, and sometimes not even to them.

Above all, the televised presence of so many western rescue teams in Armenia and the daily reports of western generosity and Soviet gratitude may cause people in the Soviet Union to question whether the world is really as hostile as their textbooks and political commentators have led them until recently to believe. It may never be as easy as it has been for Soviet leaders to convince their people that the West is a natural enemy.

PRUDENCE WITH PLASTIC

Greater freedom carries with it greater responsibility. A growing number of personal borrowers are having to re-learn this ancient truth as the rise in interest rates steadily increases the burden of loans taken out when credit was cheaper.

The past few years have seen a very rapid development in the range and availability of financial services of all kinds and sources of lending in particular. Deregulation of financial markets and financial institutions has contributed powerfully to this process, especially the encouragement of competition between banks and building societies.

As a result consumers have had more choice and a greater chance of finding the financial product precisely adapted to their needs. But a growing eagerness to serve the customer has inevitably placed a greater responsibility on the customer to shop wisely.

The rise in personal borrowing has prompted Labour's front bench Treasury spokesman, Mr Gordon Brown, to call on the Government to do more to protect people from the wide variation in interest rates. In an admirable entrepreneurial spirit he has published his own list of different credit card providers with the rates of interest charged — surely a highly saleable service. He has promised to go on doing this until the Government takes the task over, a pledge which may leave him with a very long-term commitment.

Mr Brown has raised a serious question. What are the limits of Government responsibility towards the consumer when a free market among the producers is likely to provide the best service for customers overall? Mr Brown talks about "Government action to protect consumers from widely varying interest rates". He appears to mean action to protect them from the credit card companies, but the providers of credit cards already have a powerful incentive to stop borrowers from borrowing more than they can afford — fear of not getting repaid. He is really talking about protecting people from themselves. Individ-

uals have certainly been saving less and borrowing more. Competition to lend to consumers has doubtless contributed to this, though more important is probably the rise in house prices which has made people feel richer and more financially confident.

Credit cards are only a small component of total personal lending. Overwhelmingly the most important element is lending on mortgages where amounts outstanding total about £195 billion compared with £32 billion of other personal sector borrowing from the banks and £6 billion of credit card lending.

The fall in net saving is one of the reasons for the consumer boom in the high street which has revived inflationary fears and prompted the Chancellor, Mr Nigel Lawson, to raise interest rates. Interest rates cannot be raised without causing some pain. The whole point of putting rates up is to make people more cautious.

Higher interest rates are, indeed, the best possible deterrent to the excessive borrowing. The Government's responsibility is to protect the consumer from dishonest traders and to create an overall monetary environment in which borrowing is kept to an appropriate level. It cannot and should not attempt to discourage particular individuals or groups of individuals by law from taking their own financial decisions for which they are much better equipped than the Government.

Credit card operators are already obliged to display the annual percentage rates they charge. Stronger and more wide-reaching "health warnings" were announced yesterday.

There is still, however, a role for advice on the level of indebtedness. Financial institutions should have every incentive to encourage their customers to take the right decisions. Yesterday's warning from the Halifax to its borrowers to remember the higher interest payments they will face as mortgage payments rise next year was only common prudence. Lenders would do well to return where possible to a more personal style of advice to their customers.

THE FRAGILE CRADLE

Mr Andreas Papandreu, beset by scandals, industrial strikes and resignations, emerged from Sunday's crucial debate on his Government's budget to claim a new vote of confidence in his leadership. The weekend's vote has relieved him from an early election, at a time when the opinion polls have been registering against him.

But he still has to seek a fresh national mandate by mid-June. His chances of surviving that remain in jeopardy — and attention is once more focused on the fragility of Greek democracy itself.

"I hope you will now take some rest and look after yourself" wrote Mrs Thatcher to him soothingly in the wake of his controversial performance at the EEC Rhodes summit two weeks ago. He has left it rather late to heed such counsel.

Mr Papandreu's health problems, after complicated heart surgery in London at the age of 69, have raised questions within his own ruling Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Pasok) about his physical fitness for high office. His undisguised obsession with a mistress half his age, apart from offending Greek morality, has cast doubt on his judgement and stability.

There is also the spiral of unending financial scandals. Serious questions surround the affairs of Mr George Koskotas of the Bank of Crete, the way in which state enterprises entrusted their reserves to him and the apparent cover-up which has followed.

A Cabinet reshuffle last month gave Mr Papandreu a chance for a thorough house-cleaning. He did not take it. In the subsequent weeks, two ministers were dismissed and three more resigned after protesting against the

"hushing-up" of scandals. The last one to go was the minister in charge of defence procurements who denounced the Prime Minister's closest aides for pressing him to drop investigations into defence contracts.

Mr Papandreu has dismissed these accusations as malicious — part of an international conspiracy to bring down his Government because it had emancipated Greece from big power tutelage. The theory falls on receptive Greek ears. It conjures up ghosts from the past when a massive defection of deputies forced the downfall of the Government headed by Mr Papandreu's father in 1964. He now says that the Greek people will not let this happen again.

Parliament's vote of support on Sunday has given him a margin of time to resist opposition calls for immediate elections. He knows that the Communists and other small parties want the electoral law modified to make representation in Parliament more proportional than it is today.

Such a system would not only make it more difficult for the conservative main opposition party, New Democracy, to win an outright majority. It would give even a fragmented Pasok a chance to participate in coalition governments. The Government still has time to introduce some form of proportional representation by next June.

Greece is now a member of the European Community as well as Nato and the West has a vested interest in its future stability. He has a responsibility to ensure that his country does not return to the political excesses which have been only too familiar in the past. The military is watching Mr Papandreu. The cradle of democracy needs careful handling next year.

A stitch in time for disasters

From Mr A. L. King-Harman

Sir, During the 1970s the international staff at Nato Headquarters produced plans for a Nato civil emergency force to be offered to any country faced with a major disaster, such as occurred recently in Mexico and now in the USSR. Infantry units would be available for anti-riot and traffic-control purposes; engineers and pioneers for demolition and clearance; and field ambulances for use in their primary role. Appropriate air and sea lift would be earmarked for the transportation of these units.

This initiative was blocked by the Nato military authorities on the grounds that the use of such units outside Europe would jeopardise Western security, whilst the Foreign Office and, to be fair, a number of other countries took the view that aid should be given nationally so that political credit could be maximized. The military response to this political initiative was, alas, typical and to be expected. As for Whitehall, the spirit of Bruges was already stalking the corridors.

In the light of current circumstances would it not be appropriate for the Secretary General to once again put these proposals to the Nato Council?

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
A. L. KING-HARMAN,
Ouse Manor, Sharnbrook, Bedford.
December 14.

From Mr W. A. M. Edwards
Sir, We in Britain and other peoples and nations have been striving to send prompt help to the Russian people to assist them in their herculean task of meeting the needs of the Armenian people. May I suggest the establishment of a British World Disaster Fund to be used on such occasions as this.

Clients of all banks would be asked in advance whether they would be agreeable to contribute the odd pence in their accounts to the fund whenever the Government felt it appropriate to designate a major catastrophe as a world disaster. The spade work having been done in advance, the way would then be clear for the Government to take immediate action on behalf of the nation to declare a world disaster and to name the date on which the deductions would be made.

The way would then be clear for those of us with larger purses to make additional donations to the fund, the whole proceeds of which would be given to that one particular cause. What a pity that we have not done the spade work already, for then the Government could have named Christmas Day as the effective date for Armenia!

Yours faithfully,
W. A. M. EDWARDS,
Witley Park House,
Great Witley, Worcester.
December 17.

From Mr A. Cooper
Sir, Whenever there is a major disaster in, or affecting, this country, an emergency telephone number is issued, consisting of at least seven digits, for anxious relatives to contact.

Considering the unfortunate regular occurrence of such disasters as the Clapham train crash and the Piper Alpha fire, surely, with present-day communications technology, it should be possible for British Telecom to reserve, and publicise (in telephone directories for example), a permanent telephone number, consisting of three or four easily-remembered digits (e.g., 999), for use in all such emergencies.

It should be a simple matter for BT engineers automatically to route calls on this number to the appropriate emergency control centre, thus saving callers the worry of waiting for the next radio or television news bulletin to discover the emergency number, and then to write it down or memorise it.

Yours faithfully,
A. COOPER,
16 Southfield Rise, Leckhampton,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

From Miss A. E. B. Lenton
Sir, If anything ought to convince us of the need for identity cards, the Clapham Junction tragedy should. To save relatives the agony of identifying severely injured bodies of loved ones is surely enough reason.

In this age, when travel is undertaken by more of the world's population than ever before, it is a matter of common sense rather than the erosion of freedom.

Yours faithfully,
A. E. B. LENTON,
Rush Court,
Wallington, Oxfordshire.

Tucking in

From Mr R. A. Whelpton

Sir, The desire to find an English equivalent of *bon appetit* is essentially based on the premise that languages are codes, being no more than different ways of expressing thoughts and feelings that are universal. In reality the person who takes the trouble to learn a foreign language properly finds a world of different thoughts and feelings opening before him, and, indeed, becoming available to him: that is why language-learning is such an enriching experience.

Expressions such as *bon appetit* reflect attitudes to both food and people, and it would be a betrayal of our English nature to find a direct equivalent.

Yours faithfully,
R. A. WHELPTON,
25 Hartlebury Way,
Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Mrs Currie and the great egg scare

From Sir Yehudi Menuhin, OM
Sir, Edwina Currie shares the classical fate of all bearers of bad tidings. In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* the queen sentences the faithful, exhausted messenger to death: the scapegoat is sacrificed, thus delaying, diverting, and betraying the remedy.

In Japan the sacrifice of the chickens would traditionally have been contemplated and the gesture fulfilled by the committing of honourable *hara-kiri* by the poultry and egg farmers and their lobby in Parliament.

Is our civilisation really more advanced for encouraging and rewarding the guilty for countering the poisoning of its people, for tolerating unethical pressures on those responsible for our fellow citizens? Is it really more advanced than, say, the ancient Egyptians or the early 20th-century Japanese?

It is to the credit of the Prime Minister that she so very reluctantly separated from her junior health minister, overpowered by gathering forces beyond her control. One can only hope that the result of this revelation, which has exposed the symptom of salmonella, will lead to the heart of the matter, which is the cause. Is it that the very concept of battery farming is flawed?

Yours faithfully,
YEHUDI MENUHIN,
4 and 5 Friarrose Mews,
Regent's Park Road, NW1.
December 18.

From Mr K. N. Redsell
Sir, The headline (December 13, early editions), "Damages call after poisoned egg claim", led me to believe that the egg producers were offering to compensate all those who had suffered as a result of the 27 salmonella outbreaks. Imagine my surprise to read that in fact the egg producers were themselves asking for compensation.

If a producer of any product continues to supply that product after knowing there to be a problem, surely that producer is liable to compensate those damaged.

Yours sincerely,
K. N. REDSELL,
Larkhays, Bury,
Nr. Woodbridge, Suffolk.
December 13.

From Dr E. S. Hodgson
Sir, When I was a medical student in the bad old days, we used to call egg sandwiches in the hospital "salmonella bunties".

Yours faithfully,
E. S. HODGSON
(County consultant in occupational health,
Staffordshire County Council),
15 Tipping Street,
Stafford.
December 9.

Child-care dangers

From Mrs Valerie Riches
Sir, In the Government's publicity drive in favour of more child-care facilities Sweden is being held up as a model. The underlying dangers of this are enormous.

Salaries of many Swedes hover just below or above the national poverty line. A family cannot be supported on one salary and health and welfare benefits favour women in the labour force: thus 86 per cent of women are obliged to join the labour force, though 62 per cent would prefer to be at home. The State therefore supplies a network of highly-efficient baby clinics, nursery schools, day-care centres, free-time centres, psychologists and pedagogues. Children in Sweden have every modern facility available to them.

Yet problem behaviour is frequent among small children. One study showed that half the nation's seven-year-olds suffer from harmful stress. Teenage rioting is a recurring problem. There are

From Mr Clive Jacobs
Sir, Mr John Biffen, MP (letter, December 16) and others who condemn Edwina Currie for her statement on eggs should consider that through her courageous and timely remarks elderly, weak, and sick people who are apparently most vulnerable to the effects of salmonella poisoning are given priority of thought over the commercial considerations of the egg producers.

Good for you, Edwina, and many thanks, for we all have responsibilities towards our senior and fellow citizens.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE JACOBS,
The White Cottage,
13c West Heath Road,
Hamstead, NW3.
December 16.

From Miss A. B. Goyder
Sir, Thanks to Mrs Currie the Government has been forced to warn us to avoid eating raw eggs and to hard-boil those we cook.

It should instigate an urgent programme of research (especially into chicken meat, with its recycled offal) and legislation to eradicate the danger of salmonella poisoning, so that we can return to our normal diet.

Yours faithfully,
A. B. GOYDER,
Gate Cottage,
Hamstead Norreys,
Newbury, Berkshire.
December 16.

From Mr R. Scott
Sir, Could government and egg producers now promote a liability scheme to show that "These eggs are produced in accordance with the Government code of practice for poultry breeders and egg producers", with a simple logo stamped on such eggs? (The return of lion eggs?)

Yours faithfully,
R. SCOTT,
10 Grey Towers Drive,
Nunthorpe,
Middlesbrough, Cleveland.
December 16.

From Mr Bernard Hypher
Sir, My wife has invented a modern version of the medieval bishops' *praesentatio* ritual for checking whether Communion bread and wine were poisoned. She invited me to have some of her marzipan, to which I am rather partial.

As I have not developed salmonella poisoning, she has completed the Christmas cake. She says that if a middle-aged male can survive, then so can the rest of the family.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD HYPHER,
40 Twemlow Avenue,
Parkstone, Poole, Dorset.
December 10.

some 25,000 children in State custody, 12,000 of whom have been taken into custody by force (Compare this to a sum total of 1,500 children in State custody in the other Nordic countries). Over 125 children commit suicide each year.

Among explanations for these social problems, the one most cited is the decline of parental supervision in a country where it is now normal for both parents to be working full-time.

Children cannot have their underlying need for security met without normal family relations. Children need contact, a sense of togetherness with their parents. Our Government needs to address itself to raising the status of home-makers, not yet another step in their demises.

Yours sincerely,
VALERIE RICHES
(National Honorary Secretary),
Family and Youth Concern,
Wicken,
Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire.
December 16.

Traffic troubles
From Mr Martin G. Richards
Sir, The December 7 article in your Spectrum series on transport and traffic problems perpetuated the fallacy that electronic road pricing (ERP) was actually implemented in Hong Kong, and then withdrawn. This is not so.

Although a study, commissioned by the Hong Kong Government and executed by a group of companies, including this one, had demonstrated that it would be technically feasible to introduce ERP, and that this would reduce road usage in congested areas at peak periods, particularly benefiting bus users, Government decided not to proceed with the implementation of the scheme, largely for political reasons. To report, for instance that congestion was caused by vehicles parking before reaching charge points is simply wrong. There was no congestion because there were no charge points.

All the evidence suggests that

numbers involved in a tunnel accident could be grotesque — before station managers are prompted to take firm decisions in the interests of passenger safety? Oxford Circus station is often closed in the evening rush hour to prevent overcrowding on the platforms. Isn't it time that other managers, at the morning crunch points, took similar steps, however much none of us likes to be late for work?

Yours sincerely,
MARTIN G. RICHARDS,
Managing Director,
The MVA Consultancy,
MVA House, Victoria Way,
Woking, Surrey.
December 12.

Long-standing plaint
From Mrs Paula Burnett
Sir, This morning, on leaving Oxford Circus Underground Station, I asked an official what was regarded as a full load for a Victoria Line train. He said 650 people. I had just left a train which had been carrying around 1,000.

Working on a careful, if difficult, head count, there were well over 100 people — perhaps as many as 150 — standing (if that is the word) in my carriage, and there are seats for 40. We were packed in worse than I have ever known (and it is frequently appalling) the length of the six-coach train.

Shall we have to wait until another horrific event — and the

Fair shares for all over VAT

From Mr R. W. Maas
Sir, I refer to your report (Business and Finance, December 13) of Lord Cockfield's remark that almost everyone accepts the need to make VAT approximately equal in all the European Community states if the internal market is to work effectively, and accordingly zero-rating should not be allowed to remain a permanent feature after 1992.

It is not clear on what basis Lord Cockfield feels qualified to speak on behalf of "almost everyone". I would be surprised if most people really believe that if we retain zero-rating the Channel tunnel will be permanently blocked with German housewives coming to England to do their daily shopping for food; that the average Frenchman will substitute *The Times* or another English newspaper for the French one that he normally reads; or indeed that French water or electricity authorities are going to close down in France and set up in England and somehow supply these commodities from here to the French domestic market. If the retention by the UK of zero-rating is to distort the internal market all of these things would need to happen.

The idea of the common internal market is surely that different VAT rates should not influence people's choice of where they purchase goods or where they set up business. This has no validity where a person's customers are so localised that it is impractical for him to set up business in a distant location, or the value of consumer purchases is so small that for the majority of people the cost of travelling to a different country to purchase the items would far outweigh any VAT saving.

It is difficult to see any logical reason to deny a country the right to decide on social grounds to continue zero-rating items such as food, other perhaps than a bureaucratic desire for tidiness. If it is felt important not to have three rates of VAT this latter could easily be satisfied by having a lower rate of VAT anywhere in the band of 0 per cent and 5 per cent instead of the Commission's proposed 4 per cent to 9 per cent.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT MAAS (partner),
Blackstone Franks & Co.,
Chartered Accountants,
Barbican House,
26-34 Old Street, EC1.
December 16.

From Mr Derek Bloom
Sir, As we all know, Lord Cockfield's agenda for 1992 includes the extension of VAT to become a universal tax applied on a uniform basis, though with some national discretion as to rates. Additionally, the intention is that goods and services exported from one EC country to another would no longer be exempt. Instead, it is proposed that the tax collected in their country of origin should be refunded to the country of consumption through a clearing mechanism.

To what extent this will come about remains to be seen, but the full scheme would automatically generate data on intra-EC trade. Consequently, the potential would be there to supply all the information that businessmen, academics, and politicians might want. It would be absurd not to make it available.

Yours faithfully,
D. BLOOM,
47 Old Church Street,
Chelsea, SW3.
December 16.

False distinction

From Dr John Penman
Sir, You report (December 15) that the Church of England proposes no longer to use the word "mankind" on the extraordinary ground that some people may think it means male persons.

Is there any evidence that this belief exists? If there is, the remedy is education, not the attempted abolition of a word which everyone has understood for at least seven centuries.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN PENMAN,
Forest View,
Chute,
Near Andover, Hampshire.
December 15.

Diminishing assets

From Mrs Christopher Tatham
Sir, I too (Mr Ware's letter, December 12) am the less than lucky owner of an ever older Premium Bond, AZ681230, purchased in November, 1956, which, together with its 152 siblings, has proved stubbornly and entirely unproductive.

Though perhaps past their best, I would like to suggest to Ernie that these old-timers be given a "consolation" draw at least once a year, with younger numbers being allowed into the "also-ran" club on a suitable sliding scale.

Yours faithfully,
REGINE TATHAM,
6 St. James Terrace,
Winchester, Hampshire.
December 12.

From Mrs Sybil Coote
Sir, I can do better than Mr Pickin (December 12). My grandfather (born in 1843) left £750 2½ per cent Consols to my aunt, saying "it would keep her in shoe leather". I have them now, and the interest barely buys me an annual pair of slippers!

Yours faithfully,
SYBIL COOTE,
50 Boveney Road, SE23.
December 12.

Letters to the Editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (01)782 5946.

THE ARTS

TELEVISION

Title deeds

Anyone who respects a title is a fool; anyone who actively seeks one deserves what he or she gets. To complain that honours are unfairly distributed is to ignore the great British tradition of profane simony.

The baronetage, that comforter of the obscure gentry, was created by James I as a commercial proposition to raise revenue for his Irish adventures. Precisely how honourable do modern baronets of ancient creation feel?

World In Action (Granada) had a fair bash at the question of alleged abuse under the present dispensation. Mrs Thatcher dishes out a disproportionate number of honours to "leading industrialists" whose firms have in many cases contributed minimally to Tory party coffers; she also has a habit of spraying knighthoods around the back benches.

The suggestion, Mr Lloyd, is that it too often looks as if honours can be bought on the one hand, and on the other that they might be used as a parliamentary carrot to keep potential rebels in line.

Peace, Lloyd George and his entirely proper relationship with my father, there does not seem to be anything in the rule book to prevent Prime Ministers doing either of these things, should they so wish: one only notices their absence, as when Edward Heath's stinging in this field prompted mutterings of "knight starvation".

Macmillan's liberality was a standing joke, while Wilson's innocence in this field nevertheless makes interesting reading: Lord Kagan and Sir Eric Miller.

Lady Falkender made a special guest appearance from her hospital bed, descending on the fact that her influence on the infamous Resignation List was merely advisory. So be it. Labour's worthies have been more than matched by the Conservative government's bestowal of favour on the likes of Sir Larry Lamb and Sir Gordon Reece.

Meanwhile, if it is not already too late for the New Year deadline, this column would like to submit its Prime Ministerial consideration the name of Ian Holm, for keeping a straight face throughout 13 episodes of *Game, Set and Match* (also Granada), which came to a close last night.

Martin Cropper

Looking for children's outings which will include something for the adults to enjoy? John Russell Taylor has some suggestions

Artful dodges for parents

GALLERIES

Fiat 1899-1989
Science Museum

T.E. Lawrence
National Portrait
Gallery

Rory McEwen
Serpentine Gallery

Turner at Farnley
Tate Gallery

Henry Moore: The
Shelter Drawings
British Museum

Wake Up and
Dream!
Theatre Museum

Shows which are palpably about art and something else frequently perform a nice balancing act. But a balancing act which may be particularly useful at this time of year, when adults are frantically wondering what to do with the kids over the holidays. The art can be the sweetener for the something else as far as the grown-ups are concerned, or the something else may be just what is needed to lure the kids into a show which otherwise would put them off completely.

Art, indeed, if you are really looking for it, can lurk in the oddest places. Take the new show at the Science Museum (until March 31), Fiat: An Italian Industrial Revolution. True, the second sub-title does characterize it as "Ninety Years of Automobile Art and Design". You probably read that as no more than a bit of manufacturer's over-enthusiasm.

You would certainly not expect to get an exceptional collection of de Chirico and Sironi and Casorati and Anagninis thrown in for good measure. And you would be amazingly sanguine if you hoped for a spectacle of such stunning elegance as greys on the third floor, a succession of spare and immaculate white boxes in which each car, each model, each mock-up is presented as a major sculpture of our time.

Which, in a sense, it is. While anyone who is interested in cars just as cars will have his fill of documents and desirables, the accent is on design and the sculptural qualities of the product.

Most strikingly, there is a full-scale wooden model of the Nuova 500 (1957) which is everything a sculpture-holic could wish. But even the cars themselves, which range in date from the Fiat F2 racing car of 1907 to the Ferrari F40 of 1987, are displayed in such a way as to enliven our sense of them as objects which are designed, as works of art in more than a merely figurative sense.

Accompanying them there is ample documentation on the extraordinary architecture of the classic Fiat factory in Turin, and the diverse and unexpected reactions Fiat has produced in artists both specifically commissioned and independently interested.

No doubt the de Chirico paintings are the oddest: notably the

bizarre canvas which sandwiches a typical Neo-Classical horse and rider between the first Fiat and the 50th anniversary car, the 1400. But it is even more surprising to find out how involved Sironi was with Fiat for two decades, especially as an advertising designer. The combination is guaranteed to keep arties, smarties and hearties all blissfully happy.

Another show which should similarly sweep the board is that which the National Portrait Gallery is currently (until March 12) devoting to T.E. Lawrence: writer, man of action and human enigma. The *Boys' Own Paper* aspects of Lawrence's career can hardly be ignored, and are there in full measure. But the show also reminds us that Lawrence was an archaeologist and man of letters, a translator of Homer and friend to many of the loftiest literary and artistic figures of his day.

In a couple of these latter roles he was responsible for commissioning (with the counsel of Eric Kennington) a series of amazingly distinguished illustrations or decorations for the earliest editions of *The Seven Pillars of*



Brilliant: Sydney Carline's "The Destruction of the Turkish Transport", at the National Portrait Gallery

Wisdom. Most of the originals are here, comprising some of the finest work of William Roberts, a notoriously patchy artist. Lawrence happened to catch at his peak, Paul Nash, Blair Hughes-Stanton and Kennington himself, still grossly underestimated.

Lawrence the man of action was also provocative of much art, directly in numerous portraits (the best probably by Augustus John) and indirectly in War Artists' records of the war in the desert, which include Sydney Carline's brilliant aerial "Destruction of the Turkish Transport" and Henry Lamb's dynamic, dreamlike "Irish Troops in the Judean Hills surprised by a Turkish Bombardment".

And if art does little for you,

there are weapons and uniforms, photographs of the scenes of action, and a collection of film snippets which show us the man as he lived. Arguably, even the closest perusal of the evidence does not get us much closer to solving the riddle of Lawrence the man. Politician or poseur, fantasist or documentarist, model schoolboy hero or neurotic and pervers?

Art which serves something else is not confined to these overtly historical shows. Rory McEwen's botanical paintings at the Serpentine until January 8 exquisitely combine exact science with a strong artistic impulse.

One can think of many other botanical illustrators whose work

indeed they could easily be by any of a hundred competent 19th-century amateurs.

The point of the display must be to document the ways, and to indicate that even the greatest of painters took on quite menial jobs for friends or patrons. These watercolour sketches of birds belonging to (or killed by) the Fawkes family of Wharfedale make an agreeable, very minor, show.

A near perfect example of records which become willy-nilly art, Henry Moore's *Shelter Drawings*, though imposed in a general sort of way by Moore's position as an Official War Artist, prove to take up and develop a theme already central to his work — the recumbent figure — and develop it in a way which was richly fertilizing for his subsequent art.

The British Museum has on until February 12 a virtually complete display of these works: the two surviving sketchbooks are shown complete and together for the first time, and there is a sizeable collection of the images Moore later developed from them, not to mention a fascinating room of parallels in the work of other artists who worked in the Underground at the same time.

Once one has heard the comment attributed to Francis Bacon, that they look like a lot of old knitting, it is difficult to put it from one's mind. But these intense and poignant images survive even a whiff of ridicule.

The pictures in the Theatre Museum's show *Wake Up and Dream!* (until January 15) have the element of ridicule built in: there would be little point in anyone without a sense of humour going solemnly to look at these designs (mostly back designs, one must not unkindly say) for Broadway musicals from 1900 to 1925 — any more than there would be for such a person to go to the shows they memorialize.

And yet, wonder at the sheer invention of these often nameless designers, called upon to fulfil the wildest fantasies of lunatic and desperate concocters of popular entertainment. Creatures celestial, denizens of the deep, saints and sinners? No problem. Leave it to the likes of Madame Haverstick or Charles Lemaire, to Hugh Willoughby or Yetta S. Kiviet.

Flawed but forceful

CONCERTS

ECO/Cleobury
Barbican Hall

Suddenly it seems to be the year of *L'Enfance du Christ*. Berlioz's "trilogie sacrée", a welcome seasonal supplement to *Messiah* and *The Christmas Oratorio* is once more in favour: I have already come across a valiant school performance in America; Westminster Cathedral plans one for Thursday; and on Saturday Stephen Cleobury brought it to the Barbican.

The stumbling block has always been its rambling form, its idiosyncratically Gallic style. For too many ears schooled in the Ger-

manic Christmas order, its loose and leisurely storytelling, its fanciful, almost Poussin-esque scene setting, can be somewhat intractable. But Brahms himself knew the work's worth and Cleobury's performance, for all its shortcomings, persuaded us of it forcefully.

Berlioz had started the piece by scribbling down the idea for the "Shepherds' Farewell" at a party. He framed it with a pungently archaic little orchestral fugue and a tenor solo about the Holy Family at an oasis; and this central section remains the work's core. It was a pity, then, that it was the most weakly performed part of the evening. Cleobury had brought with him the King's College Choir and a handful of women from the Cambridge University Musical Society for the offstage Alleluias:

record. "Unsurprisingly, only Genesis seems to have been tackled."

This Prelude is actually a modestly proportioned, carefully composed piece, a mite too regularly metrical, perhaps, but contrapuntally inventive and sensitively orchestrated. It calls for lavish forces, including a wordless choir (the sure-pitched Philharmonia Chorus), a vocabulary, though thoroughly Schoenbergian, incorporates chains of softening parallel thirds and pitches that serve as points of orientation.

I am not sure that the work really ends in C major, as the programme note would have us believe, but neither is it the representation of chaos its early critics mischievously alleged it to be. Giuseppe Sinopoli conducted

what seemed a tidy performance. The meat of the programme, though, was a fine performance of Schoenberg's *Erwartung*, Op 17, his pre-12-note expressionistic nightmare of 1909. Here the soprano Karan Armstrong, though pitted against the large orchestral forces that Schoenberg marshals with such vividly dramatic power, was more than equal to the flux of emotions the piece demands.

Andor and horror were mixed in a combination of such potency that the more idealized romantic storm and stress of Brahms's Violin Concerto seemed like a mere charade, despite the fact that the soloist, Shlomo Mintz, played this undeniably great work with ample warmth and majesty.

Hilary Finch

Stephen Pettitt

Philharmonia/
Sinopoli
Festival Hall

Inevitably the Schoenberg season on the South Bank has included a fair number of rarities, unknown even to those who consider themselves to be reasonably au fait with his work. This concert began with one such piece, the Prelude to the *Genesis Suite*, Op 44, which was written in Hollywood late in 1945.

Why only the Prelude? The answer is that the whole suite was commissioned from a number of composers, Stravinsky and Milhaud amongst them, by the film composer Nat Shilkret, whose ambition was to put "the Bible on



Man at work: Chris Rea is an impassive but very skilful performer

Craftily mature

ROCK

Chris Rea
Wembley Arena

Since the release of last year's *Dancing With Strangers*, Chris Rea has graduated from touring the Odessa and Apollo to a four-night residency at Wembley Arena. The trappings of a bigger show were evident in the sophisticated lighting and quadrophonic sound system which bounced the eerie audio effects of seagulls on a seashore or a circling helicopter around the four corners of the huge room, à la Pink Floyd. For the finale of "Driving Home For Christmas", giant inflatable Santas were sent bobbing across the heads of the crowd, while "snow" drifted gently under the spotlights

and balloons were released from the ceiling.

But the essence of Rea's anti-performing style had not changed one jot. Dressed in a sensible check shirt, red braces and baggy trousers, with a waistline to match that of the chubbier Santa, he stood impassively, wearing the furrowed expression of a man engaged in work of an absorbing and highly skilled nature. Around him, mostly seated, was a static collection of the most assiduously uninteresting session musicians one could hope to imagine. During "On The Beach", Max Middleton's twinkling piano forays coloured the mood like flocks of foam on the waves, but for the most part they all seemed to be underplaying as if their lives depended on it.

The 37-year-old Rea is a composer who writes from the heart, and the fact of his quiet-natured, prosaic personality is reflected in his songs. For me, as his nicotine-stained baritone traced the delicate moods and wispy melodies of "Nothing's Happening By The Sea", "Ace Of Hearts", "Josephine" and "Loving You Again", it became an effort of will to stay awake, but this huge audience of presumably recent converts greeted the introduction of each new number with evident delight.

Where Rea's maturity gave him the edge was on a number like "Joys Of Christmas" in which he reeled off a catalogue of social ills observed in the depressed towns of his northern England homeland. One felt that he had been around long enough to give the song the gravitas it required and to make the message stick.

His guitar playing was touched throughout by a languid, genteel inspiration and passages which ranged from the coarse, thick riff of "Let's Dance" to the stinging R.B. King-style blues phrases of "Just Passing Through" and the majestic slide solo at the end of "Que Sera" all boasted an undeniably magic ring.

John Percival

David Sinclair

Squashed flat

THEATRE

The Roar of the
Greasepaint, the
Smell of the Crowd
Orange Tree Theatre

This quaint Anthony Newley/Leslie Bricusse musical toured the country back in the Sixties but failed to find a London theatre keen to put it on. Later it did well on Broadway and some of its songs reached an even wider audience in versions by the likes of Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr. They tend to express simple showbiz optimism of a kind some singers find it necessary to sing again and again: the theme of "Look at me, I've pulled through, I'm a success" climbing up the scale to a loud high note long sustained. Some of the tunes, I am ready to admit, stay in the head.

The story is set in a metaphysical no-man's-land where Sir, the burly bossman in a battered brown top hat, and Cocky, a ragged underdog, are doomed to play out some mysterious Game on a large

coloured board. Likewise the audience is doomed to watch the hungry, resentful but obedient Cocky fail to get anywhere because Sir cheats and keeps changing the rules. Urchins, cloth caps worn picturesquely back to front, add to Cocky's discomfort, and ours, by taunting him from the sidelines.

"Red is the colour of a pretty letterbox," is the first song's opening line, after which the gradient of excitement can only climb. "From now on there's going to be some changes," Cocky sings, and "Now at last I see a chance of winning!" Win he does, when his refusal to play the Game makes Sir realize they need one another. Aah.

The simple-minded symbolism of the conflict, characters and game evokes the story. But even if Kim Grant's production were better sung — and one can never be confident that the right notes are being struck — this small auditorium is a quite unsuitable place for songs which, if they have to be sung at all, need the full stretch of the lungs. Howard Samuel's Cocky looks good, sings indifferently; Edward Brays has avoids danger by speaking in tune.

Jeremy Kingston

Not quite full-scale

Figgy Pudding
Lyric, Hammersmith

It is a sign of the tough times when a little theatre that used to mount its own stylish panto turns instead to a cabaret duo, Kit and the Widow, to fill the house and steady the budget. Last year the pair played the Sondheim, while a musical about a crocodile occupied the main house; this Christmas they themselves take on the bigger space, where the charm of their show, and the dangerous shading that lurks at the edges of it, are seriously diluted.

Kit is Kit Hesketh-Devereaux, smiling, courtly and devilish clever with his tongue. The songs of Stephen Sondheim are the victims of a sharp new number, in which he mocks their bizarre hops of pitch and rhythm and their internal rhymes.

One does not like to ask why his young partner, Richard Sisson, is nicknamed Widow. He sits at his white piano, tinkling away at Bach, Mendelssohn and Ravel, turning them with the minimum of effort into Lloyd Webber.

They are a very clever pair, their lyrics bracingly adroit, and they do not shrink from rhyming Fiat d'Or with matador. Of their two serious songs, the one on pollution is sung quietly, as though it were a tender hymn to the landscape, only gradually revealing its theme:

"Washed down from Derwent-water, A radio active sheep marked 'Do not slaughter'."

What I do not like at all is their idea of bringing down a preppy girl from Edinburgh to stalk the stalls offering programmes in a voice that would curdle cream. Their second guest, the mimic Steve Coogan, is not bad, but not so good that he deserves 15 minutes in the second half.

The witty comments on Glyndebourne fans and Tory support for Clause 28 are spot on, but their act now wants tightening and pruning; and, if guests are really necessary, choose some who look at home on the stage.

J.K.

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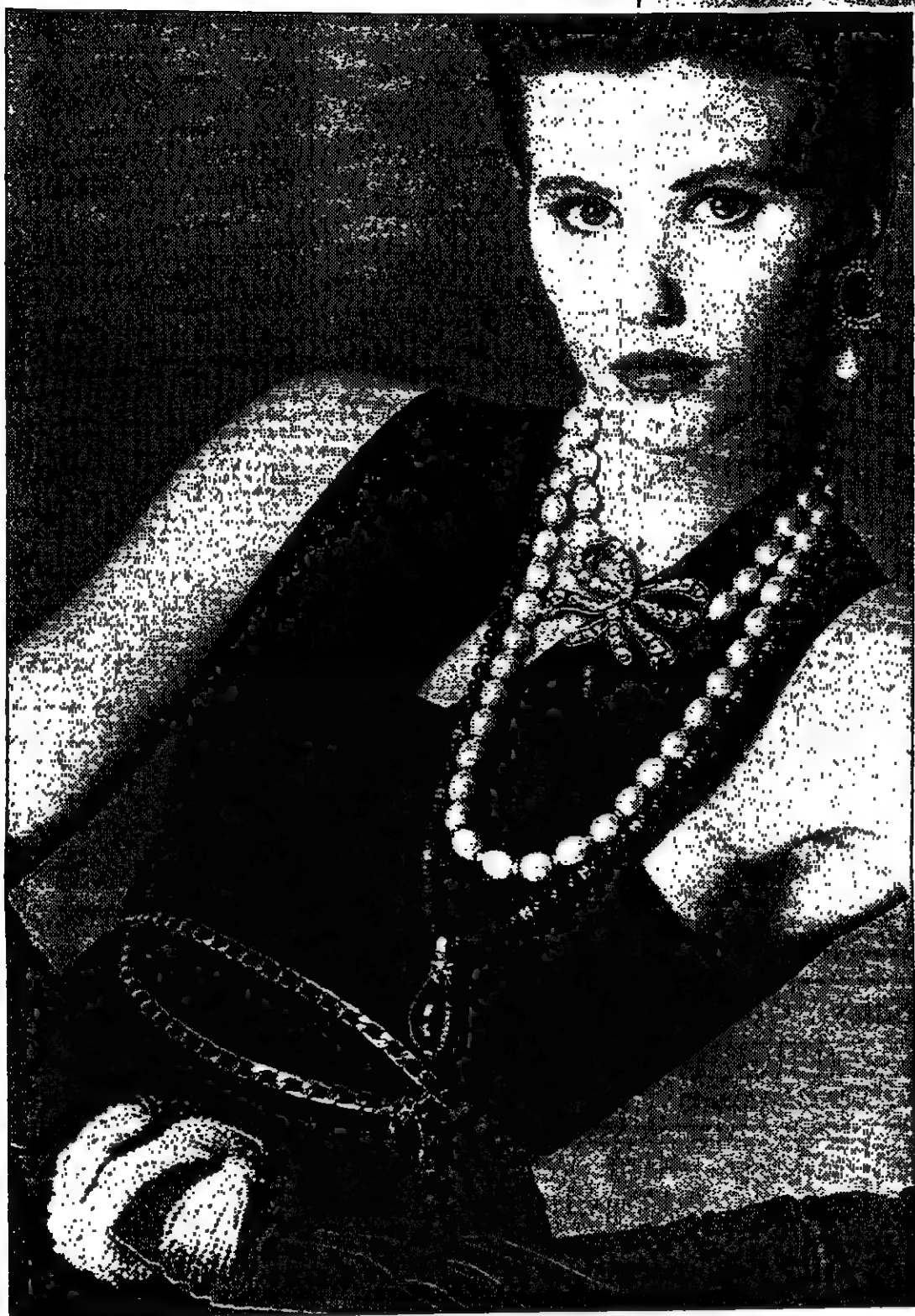
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out the
rocks

Pile on the glamour this Christmas
with gems, fake and real, from
jewel-encrusted elephants and bugs
to sparkling acrobats and clowns



Top: Freshwater pearls, leopard pin clasp, £185; stone-studded gilt bangle, £225; Ken Lane, Pearls with animal head clasp (twisted in fingers), £30; Cirio, Dragonfly pin, £58; slim jewelled bracelets (left), £128 each; pearl/gilt charm bracelets, £88 and £86; Butler & Wilson, Jewelled elephant pins, £39 to £100; Monty Don, Cashmere sweater dress, £375; Valerie Louthan, Lord's

Above: Tourmaline, amethyst and gold caré escarples, £3,700; boules necklets, gold/pearl £5,800; gold, steel/haematite, £4,000; gold/steel/leopard/clown/tourmaline, £2,200; all Bulgari. Amethyst/citrine/gold ring, £3,240; Poloma Picasso, Tiffany, Gold zodiac ring, Elizabeth Gage, Tropical bugs, £28 each, Monty Don, Dragon pin, £90; fly pin, £30; enamel/minestone/gem bracelets, £165; gilt/gem bangles, £75-£165; all Cirio. Levi jacket, £40, Harrods

Left: Earrings, £120; pearl rope, rhinestone bow, £560; "ruby" drop necklaces, £340; pearl tassel necklace (twisted on wrist), £280; pleated silk dress, £2,685; suede gloves, £140; all Chanel

Photographs by JOHN SWAINELL
Hair: Joel O'Sullivan for Brinks & Huck, Make-up: Ariane Stockists: listed below

How did the Little Black Dress earn its reputation for chic? What stretches a simple turtleneck sweater from something snug into a glamorous number? What was added to a miner's shirt to turn it into a desirable jacket for elegant women? No jewel-box prize for knowing the answers — jewels, rocks, gems and more of the same, please.

Even Levi Strauss, in the absence of supplies of jewelled bugs or smile badges in the minefields out West, had the good taste to smother his denim overalls with decorative studs. And even the most jaded heart skips a beat at Christmas when presented with a squat, little package that promises to enclose the most fashionable gift of all, a piece of jewellery.

Few expect the gems to be the real thing. Today, who cares? In a season when baroque is in vogue, when medieval tapestry rubs shoulders with gold brocade and ruby velvet is puckered up with ruffles of pleated paper silk, the sumptuous special effects required to take part in this feast of ornamentation might just as well be faked.

Romantics still hunting for the perfect present cannot go wrong with another charm to hang on a heavy chain, a knuckle-duster sized ring or, even better, a slender eternity band that might become the first of a collection. Look no further than the basic knock-around clothes most women wear today to know that a pin would make a popular present.

If one alone has impact, imagine

the effect of a drove of maharajah's jewelled elephants (you will find these at Monty Don), or a slope of skiers (Butler & Wilson), or a circus of tumbling acrobats and clowns (another Monty Don party act this season).

Even before Christmas turned us into shopping junkies, jewellers basked in a booming trade in pearl and diamond ear clips, real or fake, charm-laden chains and ropes of pearls. Serious jewellers who purvey the real thing and the creators of *faux bijoux* jostle for the same jewel-besotted customer. It is not just that they deal in similar styles, but they are positioned, literally, side by side in neighbouring silk-lined bolts.

Crossing the few square yards at the Piccadilly end of Bond Street, for example, you find the jewelled leopards and tigers that you had just glimpsed in their rightful habitat at Cartier are now stalking the other side of the street at Cirio.

Bulgari, the Roman jewellers, are now established in Bond Street, pioneering the more relaxed approach to serious gems, creating heavy gold necklets and bracelets stunk with emeralds and sapphires.

Ropes of pearls, and pearl ear clips circled in gold, are basic to the ultra-chic signature style of fashion's greatest legend Coco Chanel. But not even her passion for pearls matches that of a Mrs Morton Plant who, in 1917, traded with Cartier her Fifth Avenue mansion (where the famous jewellers still reside) for a double strand of pearls with jewelled clasp worth \$1.2 million.

Golden seal of success

A passion for gems combined with a long-standing love of history inspires the remarkable work of Elizabeth Gage, one of London's most successful jewellers.

Even before this season's renaissance of sumptuous style in jewel-encrusted velvet and silk, her extravagantly emphatic gems have held in thrall a growing clientele on both sides of the Atlantic.

The rose-pink, paisley-lined headquarters off Bond Street, where she moved four years ago, is still her only shop. But her annual exhibitions at the Carlyle Hotel in New York have won a devoted following for her intricately carved intaglios sunk in hammered gold which she lights with the lustre of her favourite grey baroque pearls and the Cretan seals or Roman coins worked with cabochon tourmalines or amethysts.

Her strong, jewelled drum "Templar" rings, a signature line, are always a sell-out. Earlier this month a medieval chain of Japanese Biwa pearls and diamonds, its centrepiece a deep red rubellite, was the star of her first Paris show, celebrated with a party at the British Embassy. Each step of her success, indeed each piece sold, is a personal wrench for a designer whose passion for her craft is expressed in each piece.

It is hardly surprising to find that a career spent creating such emotionally-charged jewels began with a simple token of love. In the 1960s, a friend had asked her to choose a beautiful and meaningful

A simple token of
love sparked a
glittering career
in jewellery for
Elizabeth Gage



Gage: inspiration from history ring that she would wear all the time. "I found nothing to make my heart sing," she says, until working on historical research in the British Museum she discovered what she wanted in the Viking room.

"The gold was marvellously bold and rich," she remembers, "something that a modern woman would wear. The ideas started to flow."

To acquire "her ring" she trained as a goldsmith at John Cass College, London, spent several summers working for a crafts-

man in Crete acquiring the techniques of hammering and texturing gold, before she began making jewellery for friends from a small studio in Knightsbridge. A commission for jewellery designs from Cartier in New York was the first step to international success.

In 1972, she won the De Beers Diamond International Award for one of her flexible "Agingcourt" rings.

"I would never let my Minoan seal go," she says of the one constant piece in her personal collection. A twisted dolphin ring, her "sun" diamond-set ring are among the significant pieces she wears all the time.

"There has been no magic wand, but a series of stepping stones. I consider myself lucky. I am doing what I have always wanted to do and have the means to use my imagination. Ideas come from working at the bench."

Rare fossils, intaglios and coins ("I have a good source of Roman coins near my cottage in Gloucestershire"), with their innate aura of history, combined with her assured way of scattering diamonds among a mix of the greens and various pinks of peridot, amethyst and tourmalines, all sharpened against a base of textured 18 carat gold and glossy enamel are the hallmark of her special style.

Elizabeth Gage Jewellery, prices from £1,000, is at 20 Albemarle Street, W1.



Cockatoo pin with silver coin; jadedite bead and gold necklace with coral pendant; green glass intaglio and gold earrings; (left hand), eternity rings; green glass intaglio ring; gold ring with pink tourmaline; Charlemagne ring; Templar ring with green tourmaline; Cirio ring with yellow sapphire; all Elizabeth Gage

Precious proceeds

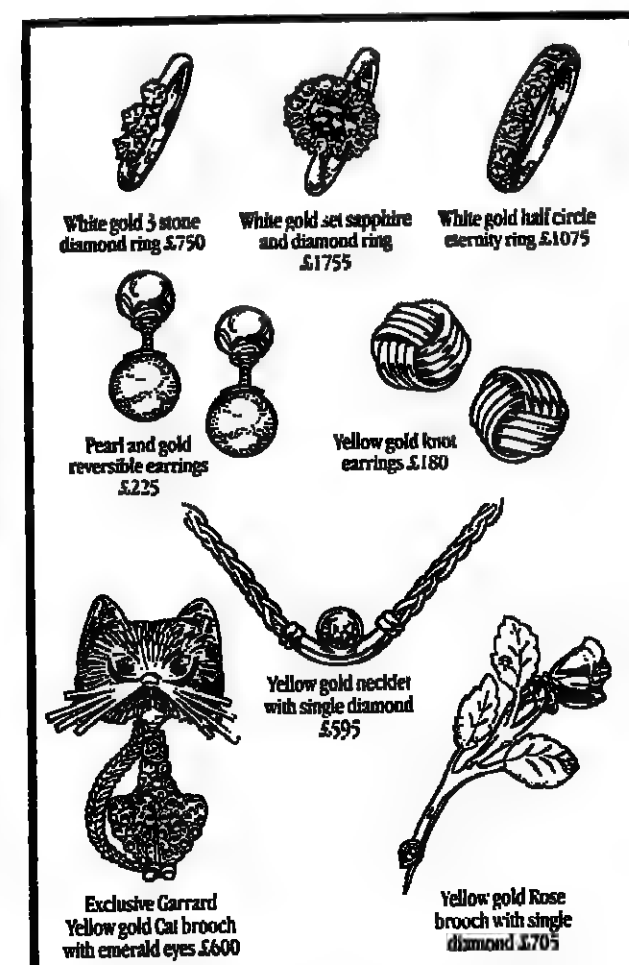
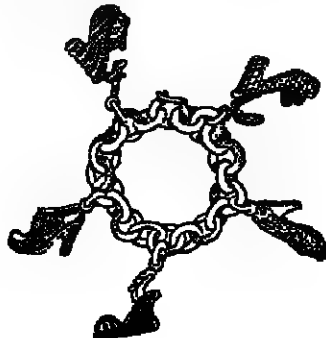
Nigel Milne, specialist in that graceful Edwardian style of jewellery, is donating proceeds from the sales of some of his more popular styles to Birthright. Anyone spending £625, say, on a pair of haematite and gold tricorn earclips is also investing in the vital medical research by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists. Nigel Milne is at 16c Grafton Street, W1.

JEWELLERY STOCKISTS: BUNN & WILSON, 20 South Molton Street, W1; Bulgari, 172 New Bond Street, W1; Chanel, 25 Old Bond Street, W1; 31 Sloane Street, SW1; Cirio, 9 New Bond Street, W1; 178 Regent Street, W1; 20a East Street, Brighton; 55 Brompton Road, London; David Fielden, 137 King Road, SW5; Elizabeth Gage, 20 Albemarle Street, W1; Len's, 66-70 Burlington Arcade, W1; Monty Don, 58 Beauchamp Place, SW3; 172 New Bond Street, W1; Ken Lane, 30 Burlington Arcade, W1; 66 South Molton Street, W1; 50 Beauchamp Place, SW3; Tiffany, 25 Old Bond Street, W1

New line for well-heeled charms

Thirties platform-soled sandals and sculpted wedged ankle-strap stepped in smartly as treasured museum pieces in a retrospective exhibition at the Victoria & Albert museum earlier this year. The work of Salvatore Ferragamo, founder of the Florentine shoe empire, they have now made a further leap in their evolution, as "charms". His daughter, Giovanna Gentile Ferragamo, designer of the Ferragamo ready-to-wear clothes, worked with her sister Fabia to create a line of jewellery that immortalizes in nine-carat gold plate miniatures several of their father's more dramatic shoes. A handsome chain bracelet shod with five shoe charms (illustrated on the right) costs £250.

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BBC1

- 6.00 Ceefax AM.
6.35 Leon Errol in *Dad Always Pays* (b/w). 6.55 Weather.
7.00 Breakfast Time with Kirsty Wark and Jeremy Paxman. Includes national and international news at 7.00, 7.30, 8.00 and 8.30; weather at 7.25, 7.55 and 8.25; regional news and travel reports at 7.27, 7.57 and 8.27.
8.30 The Flintstones (r). 8.55 Regional news and weather. Open Air. A chance to talk to John Downer, producer of the wildlife series *Supersense*. Ring 051 814 0424. 9.20 Kilroy. Robert Kilroy-Silk chairs a studio discussion on the plight of the homeless at Christmas time.
10.00 News and weather followed by *Going for Gold* (r). 10.25 Children's 8.30 presented by Andy Crane begins with *Playbus* 10.50 *Paddlington* (r). 10.55 Five to Eleven. Judi Dench with one of her favourite Christmas readings.
11.00 News and weather followed by *Open Air*. Two wildlife experts answer questions on films about endangered animals.
12.00 News and weather followed by *Daytime Live* with Alan Titchmarsh and Floella Benjamin. 12.55 Regional news and weather.
1.00 One O'Clock News with Philip Houghton. Weather 1.30. Neighbours. Jane is full of remorse. 1.50 *Open Air*. General knowledge quiz. 2.15 *Inside the Chief*. The Chief helps Mark after he knocks down an elderly woman with his van (r). International Show jumping from Olympia. David Vine introduces a programme of highlights from five days of competition.
3.50 Laurel and Hardy. Cartoon (r). 4.00 A Paddington Special (r). 4.30 Simon and the Witch. The final episode 4.35 What's That Noise?

BBC2

- 9.00 Ceefax.
9.30 *Up in Mabel's Room* (1944, b/w) starring Dennis O'Keefe and Micaela Auer. A newly wed faces complications when his ex-girlfriend decides to marry his partner. Directed by Allan Dwan. 1.15 Tom and Jerry. 1.40 The First Noel (r).
2.00 News and weather followed by *See Heat* (r). 2.50 Holiday Outings. Bermuda (r).
3.00 News and weather followed by *The World About Us*. A documentary about three truckers driving from Portland, Oregon, to Phoenix, Arizona (r). 3.50 News, regional news and weather.
4.00 Favourite Things. Beryl Reid tells Roy Plomley about the things she enjoys most (r). 4.30 See *Heart Doctors* in a Christmas Carol adapted for the hearing impaired (r).
5.00 Advice Show includes an item on children separated from their family at Christmas. 5.30 Chelsea Flower Show. Highlights (r).

BBC1

- Wales 6.30pm-7.00pm. Wales Today 1.40pm-1.45pm. News and weather 6.00-6.15pm. 10.50am-1.00pm. 1.00pm-1.30pm. 1.30pm-1.55pm. 1.55pm-2.00pm. 2.00pm-2.30pm. 2.30pm-2.55pm. 2.55pm-3.00pm. 3.00pm-3.30pm. 3.30pm-3.55pm. 3.55pm-4.00pm. 4.00pm-4.30pm. 4.30pm-4.55pm. 4.55pm-5.00pm. 5.00pm-5.30pm. 5.30pm-5.55pm. 5.55pm-6.00pm. 6.00pm-6.30pm. 6.30pm-6.55pm. 6.55pm-7.00pm. 7.00pm-7.30pm. 7.30pm-7.55pm. 7.55pm-8.00pm. 8.00pm-8.30pm. 8.30pm-8.55pm. 8.55pm-9.00pm. 9.00pm-9.30pm. 9.30pm-9.55pm. 9.55pm-10.00pm. 10.00pm-10.30pm. 10.30pm-10.55pm. 10.55pm-11.00pm. 11.00pm-11.30pm. 11.30pm-11.55pm. 11.55pm-12.00pm. 12.00pm-12.30pm. 12.30pm-12.55pm. 12.55pm-1.00pm. 1.00pm-1.30pm. 1.30pm-1.55pm. 1.55pm-2.00pm. 2.00pm-2.30pm. 2.30pm-2.55pm. 2.55pm-3.00pm. 3.00pm-3.30pm. 3.30pm-3.55pm. 3.55pm-4.00pm. 4.00pm-4.30pm. 4.30pm-4.55pm. 4.55pm-5.00pm. 5.00pm-5.30pm. 5.30pm-5.55pm. 5.55pm-6.00pm. 6.00pm-6.30pm. 6.30pm-6.55pm. 6.55pm-7.00pm. 7.00pm-7.30pm. 7.30pm-7.55pm. 7.55pm-8.00pm. 8.00pm-8.30pm. 8.30pm-8.55pm. 8.55pm-9.00pm. 9.00pm-9.30pm. 9.30pm-9.55pm. 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Physical sketch
The Witch
The Fair

MARKETS	THE POUND
FT 30 Share 1434.6 (-1.4)	US dollar 1.8220 (+0.0100)
FT-SE 100 1770.5 (-3.2)	W German mark 3.2076 (+0.0158)
USM (Datastream) 145.93 (-0.23)	Trade-weighted 78.0 (+0.3)

THE TIMES

TUESDAY DECEMBER 20 1988

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Executive Editor
David Brewerton

T-Line lets offer for Suter lapse

Thomson T-Line's bid for Suter, the industrial conglomerate, has been allowed to lapse, with acceptances from just 27 per cent of Suter shareholders, despite the board's agreement.

Thomson itself allowed the bid to fail by not extending the offer beyond its first closing date. The decision was taken in the light of the hostile £165 million bid for Thomson from Ladbroke Group, said a spokesman for Hambros, Thomson's merchant bank, allowing the company to concentrate on fighting that bid.

Mr Tony Paton-Walsh, Suter's company secretary, said the company would not seek fresh offers.

Rejection call

Cambrian & General Securities, once controlled by Ivan Boesky, the disgraced arbitrageur, has urged shareholders to reject the "absurdly low" offer from Leucadia. Cambrian says Leucadia's offer of 100p for each ordinary share and 120p for each capital share are at excessive discounts to net worth.

Temper, page 20

Acatos slips

Acatos & Hutcheson, the edible oils producer, saw profits slip from a peak of £12.25 million to £11.78 million in the year to October 2. An unchanged 5.5p final dividend makes 9p (8.5p).

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STOCK MARKETS

New York	Dow Jones	2180.36 (+8.65)
Telco	Nickel Average	2947.08 (-8.85)
Hong Kong	Hang Seng	2611.84 (-17.35)
Amsterdam	AEX	285.2 (+3.0)
Sydney	AO	1451.5 (+4.5)
Frankfurt	Commerzbank	1623.8 (+13.2)
Brussels	General	5410.4 (+3.8)
Paris	CAC	3940.0 (+0.6)
Zurich	SKA	506.2 (+0.1)
London	FT-30	1434.6 (-1.4)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)
FT-100	FT-100	1770.5 (-3.2)

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

RUSSIA	149p (+14p)
Christie Intl	607p (+12p)
Church	440p (+10p)
Elys (Wimborne)	735p (+10p)
Int Thomson	880p (+10p)
Body Shop	490p (+9p)
Yale & Vior	312p (+9p)
Fletcher King	180p (+7p)
Dagety	302p (+9p)
FALLS	
Enterprise	480p (-8p)
Lasmo	482p (-20p)
Sema Group	297p (-27p)
DAKS Simpson 'A'	605p (-15p)
Sears	107p (-7p)
Nat West	515p (-8p)
Logica	338p (-10p)
Boatland	67p (-8p)
Quintient	25p (-8p)
Wickes	154p (-7p)
Bejam	188p (-7p)
Closing prices	19819
SEAG Volume	403.8m

INTEREST RATES

Lending Bank Base	13%
3-month interbank	13 1/2%-15%
3-month eligible bills	12%-12 1/2%
buying rate	
US Prime Rate	10 1/4%
Federal Funds	8 1/4%
3-month Treasury Bills	8.18-8.14%
30-year bonds	9 1/2%-9 3/4%

CURRENCIES

London	New York
£/\$	\$1.8220
£/DM	DM1.7620
£/SwF	SwF1.4872
£/FF	FF10.9639
£/Yen	Yen124.05
£/Indec	Indec23.0
£/ECU	ECU 0.849584
SDR	SDR 0.743435

GOLD

London Fixing	AM \$413.65 PM \$413.00
close	\$413.00-\$413.50 (\$226.75-227.25)
New York	
Comex	\$413.50-\$414.00

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Feb)	pm \$14.65 bbl
* Denotes latest trading price	

THE TIMES

STOCK WATCH
0898 141 141

Market news on Stock-watch yesterday included: Lasmo (01105) fell 9p after selling its stake in Enterprise (02546), which slumped 68p; Storehouse (01866) acquired the right to trade in the US under the name Habitat but was still off 2p; properties did well ahead of a number of sector results. Recent additions include: Embassy Property 03533; Planning Research and Systems 03535; Secure Trust 03536. Calls charged 5p for 8 seconds peak, 12 seconds off peak inc. VAT.

NatWest worries triggered County inquiry

By Richard Thomson
Banking Correspondent

Long-standing City speculation was confirmed by the Department of Trade and Industry formal inquiry into the role of County NatWest as adviser to Blue Arrow in the bid for Manpower.

The investigation comes as a blow to County, which has undergone a strong recovery this year from heavy losses and the sudden resignation last February of Mr Charles Villiers, the chairman of County, and Mr Jonathan Cohen, the chief executive.

The resignations, which came the day before National Westminster announced that County had lost £115 million in 1987, caused widespread uneasiness in investment banking circles. Despite rumours of investigations, Lord Boardman, chairman of NatWest, insisted at the time that he knew of no inquiry into County's dealings with Blue Arrow.

County advised Blue Arrow and its chairman Mr Tony Berry in its bid for Manpower, the US recruitment agency headed by Mr Mitchell Fromstein, which was launched in August 1987. It also handled the £837 million rights issue that financed the bid. The issue flopped when the stock market fell 40 points on the day, and only 49 per cent of the issue was taken



Mitchell Fromstein

up. County was left holding a substantial number of Blue Arrow shares but did not disclose the size of the holding.

It was not until two months later that National Westminster announced that the Blue Arrow shares were divided between two different divisions of County. The market-making arm, County NatWest Securities, held 4.6 per cent while the banking side owned 4.9 per cent.

County said that it had not been obliged



Charles Villiers

to reveal the holdings because neither of them individually amounted to 5 per cent, the level at which disclosure must be made. There was, however, considerable surprise in the City that County's market-making arm held so many of Blue Arrow's shares.

It emerged yesterday that NatWest had become so uneasy about its investment bank's activities that it commissioned Mr Philip Wilkinson, group deputy chairman and former chief executive, to investigate.



Tony Berry

The results of his researches were passed on to the DTI and triggered the appointment of official inspectors.

Mr Charles Green, deputy chief executive of NatWest, last February denied the resignations of Mr Villiers and Mr Cohen were in response to speculation that County had been in technical breach of the Companies Act by not disclosing its Blue Arrow holding earlier.

The huge losses at County last year were

partly the result of the Blue Arrow holding which had fallen nearly £50 million in value. But County had run into a series of other disasters which had swelled the loss. Some £20 million had been lost in market-making during the crash, but a further £15 million had gone in provisions against bad debt. Costs had also soared.

Partly as a result of the losses NatWest injected a further £80 million of capital into County at the end of last year.

The investment bank had suffered bad publicity when it lost large sums on futures and options trading during the crash which appeared to show that it lacked strong enough internal management controls. Mr Villiers and Mr Cohen resigned on the grounds that they no longer had the confidence of their staff.

Since their departure, County has fought successfully to rebuild its corporate finance business. During the year it has participated in several major bids, including advising Nestle in its bid for Rowntree, and CH Beazer in its bid for Koppers, the US firm.

Mr Cohen has since become a non-executive deputy chairman of Charthouse, the merchant banking arm of the Royal Bank of Scotland. Mr Villiers has become a director of Abbey National, the building society.

Pillsbury bows to GrandMet at \$66

By John Bell, City Editor

Grand Metropolitan clinched victory in its two month battle for control of Pillsbury with a revised \$66 a share offer which values the US group at £3.3 billion.

Pillsbury's chairman Mr Philip Smith and his 13 boardroom colleagues agreed to support the new terms - a \$3 a share increase - after a tough weekend of negotiations which ended late on Sunday night. GrandMet's deal is the biggest non-oil takeover by a British company.

Mr Allen Sheppard, chairman of GrandMet, said: "We are very pleased. We think Pillsbury is great for GrandMet and GrandMet can be great for Pillsbury."

The acquisition is in line with Mr Sheppard's drive to build a strong portfolio of leading brands and businesses with strong market shares. More than 80 per cent of sales in Pillsbury's consumer foods division arise from products which are either brand leaders or hold number two position in the US market.

These include Pillsbury's flour and frozen dough products, Green Giant vegetables and Burger King hamburgers. Mr Sheppard stressed that the troubled Burger King operations, second only to McDonald's in their field, would be retained. "We see a great deal of opportunity. The businesses we are going to sell are the licensed restaurants and the distribution business," US legislation prevents a drinks company like GrandMet from being in both manufacture and retailing of beer and liquor.

Since GrandMet launched its first \$60 offer, pressure has



In the can: Allen Sheppard of GrandMet yesterday after clinching his hard fought victory

been mounting on the Pillsbury board. By last Friday, GrandMet had acceptance from holders of more than 72 per cent of Pillsbury stock.

Friday's decision by a Delaware court, which struck down Pillsbury's "poison pill" defence, was a body blow to Pillsbury's hopes of continuing independence.

The final phase of negotiations were started late on Friday in New York by Mr Robert Greenhill, of GrandMet's financial adviser Morgan Stanley & Co, and Mr Allen Finkelson, a GrandMet lawyer from Cravath, Swain & Moore. According to the

advisers, Mr Finkelson said to Mr Michael Goldberg, Pillsbury's lawyer at Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, "We can do it at \$66 if you can."

"We looked at the Delaware decision," said one Pillsbury adviser. "It was definitely appealable, but that would have created continued uncertainty for employees in the company. Pillsbury could have held out for \$67, but that would have meant another two months in the swamp."

Pillsbury executives endorsed the \$66 offer and conducted an informal poll of directors late on Friday. When independent directors voted

to support the bid, lawyers and investment bankers began drawing up the paperwork.

Pillsbury's board believes it ultimately extracted a fair price. Before GrandMet's initial \$60 bid, Pillsbury's shares were trading at about \$30 each. Pillsbury will obtain an additional \$6 a share, or a total of \$36 million, by digging in its heels.

GrandMet completed two more acquisitions, this time in Europe, for a combined total of £20 million. Wienerwald has 231 licensed restaurants in West Germany, while Spaghett Factory owns five pasta restaurants in Switzerland. Comment, page 21

High Court adjourns Cramer hearing

The hearing of proceedings begun by the receivers of Barlow Clowes International to commit Mr Guy Cramer, the millionaire businessman, to prison for alleged contempt were adjourned in the High Court to the first available date after the courts resume on January 11, following the Christmas holiday.

Mr Cramer, aged 27, a former business associate of Mr Peter Clowes, the head of Barlow Clowes is alleged to have breached a High Court order made last August, preventing him from selling or dealing with any of his personal or business assets up to a figure of £14 million.

BCI claim that Mr Cramer sold his Aston Martin to his girlfriend Miss Deborah Lewis - who is now his wife - for £28,000 on a Thursday and the car was sold to a dealer the following Monday for £107,000.

The couple, who married last week, were in court to hear Mr Justice Scott agree to the adjournment.

Mr Daniel Serota, counsel for Mr Cramer, said the adjournment was necessary for further inquiries to be made.

Miss Elizabeth Gloster, counsel for the receivers, said committal proceedings against Mrs Cramer were to be discontinued as the £19,000 representing the difference between the prices obtained for the Aston Martin was to be repaid.

Growth continues as reliability of figures questioned

By David Smith, Economics Correspondent

The latest national accounts, published yesterday, suggested that growth continued in the third quarter. But the statistical fog over the economy deepened.

The Central Statistical Office said gross domestic product probably grew by just above 1 per cent in the third quarter, to a level about 3.5 per cent up on a year earlier.

However, officials said that some elements of the expenditure measure of GDP were seriously under-recorded. As a result, the average GDP measure, normally derived from the expenditure, income and output calculations of GDP, was derived only from the latter two.

The expenditure data showed a fall of nearly 3 per cent on the quarter and 1 per cent on a year earlier. Consumer spending was strong but investment and stock-building weak, and officials pointed to these areas as the likely culprits in the under-recording of expenditure. The figures showed a £4.1 billion

statistical discrepancy in the quarter, equivalent to 5 per cent of GDP.

In addition to an under-recording of expenditure, the figures could suggest that the monthly trade figures have overstated the deterioration of Britain's external position, officials said.

Attention has focused on the reliability of official statistics since the call by the Treasury and Civil Service Committee this year for an investigation into their reliability. Such an investigation has now been completed, under Mr Stephen Pickford, a Treasury official.

Mr Bill Martin, chief UK economist at UBS-Phillips & Drew, and an adviser to the Treasury Committee, said of yesterday's figures: "In a free society, it is very important that people have access to reliable information. The present unreliability of the data is fertile ground for mendacious politicians to reinterpret the past according to their liking."

Icahn raises holding

Mr Carl Icahn, chairman of Trans World Airlines, has increased his stake in Texaco and said he was not acting in partnership with anyone in connection with his growing

interest in the US company. In a statement to the Securities and Exchange Commission he said he now held 39,669,600 shares, or 16.2 per cent of the common stock.

White knights for Hammerson

By Our City Staff

The Hammerson Group has had white knight offers from North America, Sweden and the Far East, in addition to expressions of interest from British companies, Mr Sydney Mason, the chairman said.

"We have had half a dozen or so white knights. Most of the major players have put their hats in the ring. We speak to them and tell them we are not quite ready for the vultures," he said.

Hammerson is facing a hos-

tile £1.3 billion bid from Rodamco, the Dutch investment group. There is speculation that Standard Life Assurance may mount a counter offer.

This was strengthened by Hammerson's defence document which discloses that Mr Scott Bell, managing director of Standard Life and a non-executive director of Hammerson, has been advised not to take part in any Hammerson board meetings on the bid.

Comment, page 21

GEC plea for early decision rejected

By Derek Harris, Industrial Editor

Judgment on Plessey's High Court challenge to the £1.7 million hostile bid by General Electric Company and Siemens will be made today, despite a plea by Mr Jonathan Sumption, QC, counsel for GEC-Siemens, for it to be given at the end of yesterday's submissions.

He asked Mr Justice Morritt to give his decision, in any event, at the beginning rather than the end, of his summing up, since it would be during

Stock Market hours on "a highly price-sensitive issue."

Mr Christopher Bathurst, QC, for Plessey, said if no injunction was granted, GEC and Siemens could go ahead with their offer and create "an irreversible fait accompli" before it could be vetted by the European Commission. If it was blocked, and the Commission later decided it could go ahead, the only disadvantage to the bidders would be a few weeks' delay.

Elf acquires Lasmo's Enterprise stake

By David Young, Energy Correspondent

Elf, the French oil company, which has spent the past year attempting to increase its holding in the British sector of the North Sea, in the run up to 1992, has acquired Lasmo's 25.2 per cent stake in Enterprise Oil, the independent company created by the Government from the oil assets once held by British Gas.

The stake was put on the market by Lasmo, the other leading British independent oil company, last summer. Lasmo had acquired the stake from RTZ in exchange for shares three years ago.

Elf has paid £368 million for the stake in 15-year loan notes which will earn Lasmo 13 per cent a year compared to the 3 per cent yield it was receiving from its Enterprise holding.

Elf has said that it will not make a fall bid for Enterprise during the next 12 months - the Government has a golden share which expires next summer -

unless Enterprise makes any future acquisition which Elf considers would dilute the value of its holding.

The move, which was foreshadowed in The Times on November 16, follows Elf's unsuccessful attempt to take over Tricentral this year.

Tricentral was eventually acquired by Arco, of California, which is believed to

Tempus, page 20

have made an offer for the Lasmo Enterprise stake. Other bidders are understood to have included Shell.

The attraction of the Elf bid to Lasmo is that no capital gains tax payments are involved which means the deal is worth more than the 450p a share price announced. Lasmo calculates the value at 583p a share. Mr Chris Greentree, the Lasmo chief executive, said: "This deal

makes us probably the only cash-rich pure oil exploration and production company in existence at the moment. We can look for new acquisitions from a position of considerable strength."

Mr Graham Hearne, chief executive of Enterprise said: "Elf will be the third company to obtain this sizeable minority holding in our company. I have no doubt that Elf will benefit from the investment they have made in Britain's largest independent oil company, as Lasmo and RTZ have done before them."

The deal does not make Lasmo itself bid-proof and there is speculation that British Gas, which this year staged an abortive dawn raid on Lasmo, could be back in the bidding. British Gas is also being linked with a possible bid for Ultramar, and it is understood that Sun Oil, the US oil company, has been looking at expanding its British assets.

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MB Group

Abbey investors stand to gain from float 'loophole'

By Vivien Goldsmith, Family Money Editor

The proposed flotation of the Abbey National Building Society could provide greater windfall gains for investors who close their accounts after the qualifying day than for those who get shares.

This arises because provision has to be made for those ineligible to vote—those with less than £100 in their accounts, the under-18s and those who have closed their accounts between the qualifying and voting dates.

These people will get a payout which reflects their share of the society's reserves.

So a child with £1,000 in the society's Mickey Mouse Account, for example, will get a cash sum of about £50.

Those who remain members of the society and are eligible to vote can expect a handout of shares.

The society does not accord votes in line with the amount held in accounts and thus the "one man, one vote" principle will probably extend to the share structure. Each shareholder can expect about £200 worth of free shares.

But account-holders with, for example, £50,000 in their

accounts on the qualifying day, who withdrew the money before the vote, could be in line for a £2,500 payout.

The Abbey will not disclose the qualifying day in advance, but it is unlikely to be long before voting day.

But the Abbey could refuse to close any accounts after the announcement has been made. This provision—part of the model rules adopted by all building societies—is one to stop a run.

But it would not protect the society from those transferred all but a few pounds to

another society to disqualify themselves from the vote, taking a chance that the qualifying date had passed; or those who pass funds from their own accounts to their children's.

Those who open accounts now with more than £100 could still be eligible for free shares. The rules say that in order to subscribe for priority shares, members must have had £100 in their accounts for at least two years, but the time qualification does not appear to relate to the free shares hand-out.

Rival offer rejected by Banner

By Our City Staff

Banner Industries, the US industrial group involved in a bitter two-corner takeover battle for Avdel, the British industrial fasteners group, has rejected a rival offer by Textron, a US group which had emerged as an anonymous white knight on Friday.

The rival offer of 92p per share, against Banner's 88p, values Avdel at £118 million. Schroders, Textron's merchant bank, was last night expected to withdraw the offer, which was conditional upon acceptance by Banner.

As a result it appeared that Banner was close to victory. Mr Robert Gillespie, of SG Warburg, Avdel's merchant bank, said the issue raised moral questions since the shareholders would have to accept a lower offer as a result of Banner's decision. Banner would not be able to claim that its offer was in the best interest of Avdel shareholders.

Banner said it now controlled about 45.1 per cent of Avdel's capital, representing 43.18 per cent of voting rights.

\$5m purchase
Securix is expanding in the US with the acquisition of Premier Management Group and Spence Protective Agency for \$5.5 million (£2.9 million), rising to a possible \$10 million, depending on profits.

Midland cash for Unicef

Midland Bank has written off \$800,000 (£439,000) of loans to Sudan in a deal which transfers the money to the United Nations Children's Fund.

The move is the first between an international bank and an aid organization, and the first time one has been tried in sub-Saharan Africa.

Sudan has agreed to exchange the debt at a large discount in local currency. Although Sudanese debt trades on the secondary market at 2 to 5 per cent of face value, the Midland loans are believed to have been swapped for about 10 per cent of their face.

This leaves Unicef with about \$80,000 from the deal to spend on a health, water and reforestation programme.

French stake in Drummond



Beneficiaries: Stefan Simmonds, Drummond chairman (left), with Sergio Coimbra of Chargeurs

Chargeurs, a French conglomerate which owns UTA, France's second largest airline, is buying a 20.1 per cent stake in Drummond Group, the Yorkshire wool textiles group at a price of 130p per share (Wolfgang Münchhausen writes).

Both companies hope to gain distribution advantages from the agreement. Mr Mark Dickson, group managing director of Drummond, said: "This is a case of a small Yorkshire company which decided not to stay parochial, because 1992 is not going to go away. In fact it is a big step for a company based in Yorkshire,

where one regards even Lancashire as foreign territory."

Senior Sergio Coimbra, the head of Chargeurs' woolen textile division, will be appointed to the Drummond board.

Commenting on the deal, he said: "We want to get the whole business on a long-term basis."

He said the group was planning more acquisitions in the area but he expected no anti-trust issue to be raised by the European Commission.

Chargeurs has agreed not to launch a full bid for the next three years.

Following the announcement the Drummond share

price rose 5p to 104p. The deal coincided with the announcement of Drummond's interim results, which saw pre-tax profits fall from £771,000 to £501,000 in the six months ended September 30, despite a moderate increase in turnover from £14.44 million to £15.89 million.

The downturn came as a result of the current high level of interest and exchange rates, import penetration and problems in the Middle East.

Earnings per share fell from 7.22p to 4.60p, partly as a result of a higher tax charge. The interim dividend remains unchanged at 1.0p per share.

CSV cuts out 200 low-activity stocks

By Richard Thomson

Citicorp Scrimgeour Vickers, the US-owned stockbroker company, has cut the number of stocks in which it makes markets by 200 to 400 in a further effort to make a profit in current market conditions.

Scrimgeour, which reckons to have lost about £20 million over the last year in equity market-making, is pursuing a rigid policy of concentrating its activities to maximize profits. "Our aim is to build up our productivity," said Mr John McFarlane, managing director of Scrimgeour.

The company is concentrating its energies on trading the larger, higher turnover stocks. Those being cut out account for less than 5 per cent of turnover. Scrimgeour said that in some of the stocks it

was hardly ever required to quote prices or deal.

"We are confident we will be trading profitably next year," Mr McFarlane said. He added that after the spread-cutting war between market makers earlier this year, dealing spreads could begin to widen again as dealing firms suffered from heavy losses.

Scrimgeour said that it did not expect to have to make any further large staff cuts after the current move, and that it had brought its cost base down to a level at which it could expect to begin to make a profit. So far this year staff numbers have fallen from about 1,000 to 400. Scrimgeour also closed its gilt-edged trading operation in July with the loss of 40 jobs.

BT ready for more Euro links

By Derek Harris
Industrial Editor

Two co-operation deals just made by British Telecom with telecommunications operators in Spain and Italy are likely to be followed by similar deals in other European countries. West Germany and France are two of the likeliest.

The deals are in the context of the European Commission's drive to secure liberalization of telephone network operations ahead of the single market in 1992.

The Spanish deal is with Telefonos de Espana, which like BT has been privatized, with a minority stake for the state. That in Italy involves Stet-Societa Finanziaria, the state-controlled telecommunications group.

MB signs Carnaud agreement

MB Group, formerly known as Metal Box, has signed the £780 million merger agreement with Carnaud, the French packaging group.

Before the complicated merger can go ahead, however, MB Group needs clearance from the European Commission, which is investigating the deal, as well as legal approval for the change of the company's structure, and the approval of February 24's extraordinary meeting.

Craton down

Craton Lodge & Knight, the consumer product development consultancy, saw pre-tax profits for the year to end-September fall from £695,000 to £108,000. Turnover rose to £5.29 million (£4.69 million). Earnings per share fell to 0.63p (7.77p). The 1.8p final dividend makes 2.5p.

In abeyance

Australian Newspaper Mills, jointly owned by The News Corporation and Fletcher Challenge, has deferred an Aus\$600 million (£280 million) expansion plan because of signs that the upward trend in world newspaper consumption is about to level out.

Edging ahead

Watergate International, the property development company, has turned in £2.2 million half-year pre-tax profits, up from £2 million. Earnings per share are 6.16p (6.14p). The interim dividend is 1.75p.

43% accept

The recommended Guinness offer, through Harp Lager Company, for Buckley's Brewery, the south Wales brewer, attracted acceptances for almost 43 per cent of the equity, in addition to the 53 per cent Harp bought last month.

Growth plan

Severfield-Reeve has started a £1.5 million expansion of its factory at Thirsk, north Yorkshire, providing twin production lines, each housing capacity to produce more than 20,000 tonnes of fabricated steelwork annually.

Move denied

Stakis, the Scottish hotel and leisure group, denied yesterday that it was to relocate in London. Mr Andrew Stakis, chief executive, said: "It's total hogwash. We are fiercely Scottish."

S&N ally

Lothian Regional Council has pledged its support for Scottish & Newcastle Breweries against the Elders IXL bid in a submission to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

COMMENT David Brewerton

Hammerson chief keeps white knights waiting

Sydney Mason has his own word for the would-be white knights gathering outside the elegant gates of Hammerson Group's office at 100 Park Lane, London. "Vultures," he snorts.

Whether he includes his largest shareholder, Standard Life Assurance, in that unflattering ornithological category is not certain, but Standard Life might indeed find the cap (or is it hood?) will fit. Standard Life, a good friend of Hammerson for a generation, which has exchanged debt and property interests for increasing numbers of Hammerson shares, has little use for the cash which Rodamco is offering. The expectation in the market is that if Rodamco cannot do better, much better, than its current offer and other shareholders want out, Standard will step in.

Standard's managing director, Scott Bell, wisely kept his head down yesterday afternoon, declining to comment before he knew what he was being asked to comment upon. He could, of course, guess. Hammerson's defence document, a glossy production almost totally devoid of new information, notes that the same Mr S Bell, a non-executive director, has been told by his lawyers to keep out of the way when the Hammerson board discusses the bid, for fear of conflicts of interest.

Mr Mason says he has not discussed

the merger with Standard Life, and Hammerson's managing director goes one further and says that since the takeover bid from Rodamco was launched, they have heard nothing from their old friends north of the Border.

The next scheduled step in the elaborate bid dance is that Hammerson will hammer out some numbers. The defence document is full of enticing phrases leading shareholders to the invariable conclusion that there are pots of gold hidden in all over the empire, but Hammerson has until mid-January to produce the up-to-date net asset value and there is no point in letting the numbers out now.

At present, according to Mr Mason, he is treating all prospective bidders the same, leaving them standing outside on the pavement. He has no need to do anything else because the Hammerson share price is a clear pound above the Rodamco offer. But given a market slide in the new year coupled with an uplift in the Rodamco terms, he may decide to talk turkey with Standard Life or any one of the other half-dozen would-be bidders who have thrown their hats into the ring.

Meanwhile, shareholders have nothing to fear from sitting tight and watching events, although the current price in the market would be tempting for anyone with a near-term need for cash.

GrandMet's meaty task

Another day, another deal for GrandMet. After Friday's relatively modest £331 million for William Hill, GrandMet has struck its bargain for Pillsbury at £3.2 billion. The group's restless chairman, Allen Sheppard, promises a respite. "I don't expect to announce another before Christmas," he quipped yesterday. The excitement may be over, but GrandMet now has the serious business of whipping Pillsbury into shape and reducing a mountain of debt.

With Pillsbury aboard, GrandMet's gearing is back where it was after Heublein was bought at around 150 per cent of shareholders' funds. When GrandMet has attributed some value to Pillsbury's brands, and it has plenty to sink its teeth into, the debt/equity ratio will probably emerge at closer to 100 per cent. Interest cover, which GrandMet has seen at a luxurious seven times in the recent past, will shrink to a nevertheless comfortable three to four times. No problems there, given the cash-generative nature of the group's portfolio.

Mr Sheppard confirmed that he will stick to his original plan and retain the troubled Burger King chain, disposing of only the tied distribution business, Distron, and the licensed restaurant operations.

On the thorny subject of what to do with Burger King, Mr Sheppard is a contrary thinker. Unlike most Wall Street analysts, who have become bored with tales of woe from the group, he

believes that the more one looks at Burger King the more one finds. The operations have been bedevilled by abrupt changes of direction under seven presidents in the past nine years. New directions have been explored and more often than not abandoned as blind alleys. More than 2,000 units have been "discontinued" to use the currently fashionable management euphemism, over the past five years.

GrandMet sees a reasonable company trying to emerge from this mess. The company-operated Burger King outlets show fair returns. In the past year they have produced operating margins of around 16 per cent, just 2 points short of the market leader, McDonald's.

GrandMet sees not a turnaround exercise in prospect (the core Burger King business has produced slowly growing returns, it says) but a speeding-up operation instead.

Revitalizing the hamburger chain will be an acid test of the new Sheppard strategy. The problems are only partly due to promotional spending, even though McDonald's spends twice as much as the \$200 million advertising budget at Burger King. It is a classic brand management problem of a kind which GrandMet must be seen to tackle with flair.

Meantime, shareholders can take comfort that there is hardly much of a premium in GrandMet shares for the potential benefits of making Pillsbury fly. At 430p, down 1p, they sell for 8.3 times expected earnings.

BUSINESS LETTERS

British Steel predictions

From Dr R. Mackie

Sir, May I be permitted to congratulate you upon one issue and question you upon another?

First, I wish to congratulate you upon your forthright stance about the British Steel issue on the Wednesday (November 30) before it came out. As things turn out, you were dead right but there was a finite chance, at that time, that you could have been wrong (about short-term profits) and wound up with jam all over your face. I've read too many ifs and buts and could-be in my time not to appreciate your courage on this occasion.

Second, the learned Maxwell Newton, who has, to my observation, been right on a number of occasions when everyone else (well, just about) was wrong. So when I read his piece on December 12, I naturally pay serious attention; while wishing that he could advance some evidence that the US budget question is "recording so fast etc etc".

DR R. MACKIE,
3 Fairlight Cottages,
Tanners Street, Faversham.

The trouble with Next's board

From Mr William Wycherley

Sir, Your comment column (December 13), Time for David Jones to Decide What's Next, and various other reports concerning Mr and Mrs Davies' departure from Next, fills me with foreboding.

No commentator I have read has pointed out that the composition of Next Plc board was almost bound to lead to some such confrontation.

The real cause of the problem is a United Kingdom company law that allows Next Plc board to be composed as it was; the post of chairman and chief executive to be combined in one man and to have another member of his family in a key role with insufficient other directors to give a proper forum for discussion was bound to lead to trouble.

It also incidentally raises

the wider issue of how businesses keep on board the difficult, autocratic, but above all highly creative executives like George Davies.

Whilst I do not necessarily favour two tier boards, it does seem likely that this catastrophe could well have been avoided if George Davies and David Jones had had to conduct their arguments in a wider context.

Whatever the rights and wrongs, there will be no winners in this situation, and whatever the outcome, can we not learn and seek a revision of Plc board law to try to avoid such shooting-in-the-foot exercises in the future?

Yours faithfully,
WILLIAM WYCHERLEY,
53 Lombardy Rise,
Waterloo, London,
December 13.

MP's 'flawed understanding'

From Mr Mike Windsor

Sir, The recent letter from Robert Banks MP (December 6) about Membership of Lloyd's and the availability of Stop Loss Cover demonstrates a flawed understanding of both.

As a representative of the people it is hoped that he does not really believe that "something can be obtained for nothing", or that freely adopted risk can in some way be sanitized.

Membership of Lloyd's is not an investment. It is a participation in a business where unlimited liability is accepted by those who wish to take part.

Stop Loss Cover is not a means of avoiding unlimited liability but merely one of the ways of spreading risk. Like any other product, it is governed by availability and price.

It appears that Mr Banks is unable to distinguish between an investment and a business participation.

Could it also be that he believes that Stock Exchange investors should see their risk capital protected so as to absorb them of possible loss? Clearly if this were so it would be an equally ridiculous notion.

Yours faithfully,
MIKE WINDSOR,
6 Chester Road,
Northwood,
Middlesex,
December 9.

Banking on the wrong advertising image

From Mr Ian Crichton

Sir, Today's letter from Sir Richard Dobson (Luring the impecunious young into debt, December 13) is a timely one. The television advertising used by some British banks recently has been appalling.

For example, we have had NatWest advertising themselves to the strains of a pop hit from the past called "Pinball Wizard." This is designed, no doubt, to appeal to the younger generation, but surely gives the impression that a

bank is no different from an amusement arcade—a gamble with a modicum of "skill" involved. If this is the image British banks are projecting, is it any wonder that attitudes of young people toward the use of money are so self-indulgent and ultimately ruinous?

Yours faithfully,
IAN CRICHTON,
16 Knighton Close,
South Croydon,
Surrey,
December 13.

Consumers paying price for cossetting of European farmers

From Mr Jon Nicoles

Sir, I am growing tired of European Community commission and trade negotiators citing the fact that the farmers against only 24 million in the US as a reason for resisting US pressure to eliminate all "trade distorting" farm subsidies.

The community also has 323 million consumers against 243 million in the US (end-1987 figures). It has many million more taxpayers. And, since trade bulks larger in the

European economy, it is more dependent upon the prosperity of farm-product-exporting purchasers of manufactured goods and services around the world.

The US proposal may be outweighed by GATT negotiating conventions. It may be inconsistent with the US stance on textiles trade. But how long are Europeans prepared to be impoverished in order to cosset the protectionist demands of electorally-powerful minorities? IMF Occasional Paper 62, published last month, is

the latest in a lengthy list of studies showing how much better off we would all be by forgoing the idea of "fortress Europe."

What is especially galling is to be told that Europe must have a "social dimension". That objective can best be served by letting shoppers (and taxpayers) enjoy the benefit of cheap food and an unhindered choice of the world's best buys.

Yours faithfully,
JON NICOLE,
30 Gloucester Circus, SE10.

Lloyds draws rein on shop

The black horse of Lloyds Bank seems to have come a cropper when it tried to ride roughshod over the feelings of the residents of Tunbridge Wells, Kent. The bank has now had second thoughts about a plan, which I recently reported here, to close Halls, the antiquarian bookshop in Chapel Place, of which it owns the freehold. Lloyds wanted to install a cashpoint machine where the shop stood but its prospective closure provoked such a protest, including threats that customers would take their accounts elsewhere, that the bank is reconsidering.

The shop's lease was due to expire next March and, when it was heard that it would not be renewed, nearly 3,000 customers signed a petition sent to Sir Jeremy Morse, Lloyds' chairman. Support came from luminaries such as Denis Healey, Lady Antonia Fraser and book buyers from America. Miss Sabrina Izzard, the proprietor, said: "We have been here for 91 years, but the bank bought the premises, which are in a conservation area, at auction 21 years ago. Ironically, we bank with the Lloyds branch next door which does need a cashpoint, and the only place to put it was on our premises. It is not a total victory as we have not got our new lease yet, but after all the protest, we feel a lot more secure." A Lloyds spokesman said it was an "enlightened decision" to take notice of its customers and the strength of feeling in the town.

THE TIMES CITY DIARY Christmas greetings

If you thought sending your own Christmas cards was an annual chore, spare a thought for President-elect George Bush. He and his wife Barbara are apparently sending out 90,000 this year. And I hear that the press officer of a recently-privatized British company sent out his batch, only to discover that one had slipped past the franking machine. This then earned the irate recipient a 25p surcharge. He duly returned the

stamp-less envelope inside his own card to the sender and scrawled on it: "You always were a Scrooge". However, the cruellest blow of all has struck Hammerson, the property group under siege from a £1.3 billion bid from the Dutch Rodamco. The Park Lane headquarters received a card addressed to Paul van Romunde, one of Rodamco's directors. It was promptly returned, marked: "Not known at this address."

Fast mover

GrandMet's global acquisitions for fast food chains—it now has Burger King through Pillsbury and has followed this with the ac-



quisition of the Wienerwald chain from Friderich Jahn—leaves me wondering why it is so keen on the more-fattening types of food outlet. The German chain is, I am told, a cross between McDonald's and Pizza Hut. While Burger King has to content itself with being Number 2 to the hamburger chain with the golden arches, Wienerwald has had more troubled times. It expanded into pizzas and then attempted to move into the US. Its more traditional German fare failed to make an impact, forcing Wienerwald to file for bankruptcy in Germany six years ago. It was rescued, but Jahn, who has always held a tight rein on the operation, has since been trying to sell. Now I gather he will retire at the end of the month.

Broker's lament

Lack of volume in the stock market during the pre-Christmas period is clearly leaving time for its muses to put pen to paper. As a further response to the sentiments written by Eric Baker, the former Parrish broker, printed here last week, I have now received this from his former colleague, Peter Bainbridge, chief executive of Parrish, which is one of the few remaining publicly-quoted independent stockbrokers. It runs:

Nice to hear from Eric Baker. Established half-commission taker.

One of those who rules the day. That the trading floor has passed away.

But substitute the bank and broker. Far far better (what a joker). They plucked our staff and now they sacked 'em. So much for "dictum meum pactum".

But we cannot preclude the foreign trader. Or perceive him as a space invader. If we wish to play on a global basis. We have to admit the other naves.

We know they've pushed up rents and pay. But some, or most, are here to stay. We ignore them at our peril. Nomura, Svenska, Bache and Merrill.

Rosemary Unsworth

1000

FOREIGN EXCHANGE

FOREIGN EXCHANGES

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

THIRD MARKET

4.0 5.5 1
4.0 3.4 3

TECHNOLOGY

Government attacked over the IT policy

By Matthew May

Last week's report on information technology from a committee of MPs came up with a total of 52 recommendations, roundly criticizing the Government's approach and what it describes as complacency to developing British IT.

As expected, the trade and industry select committee, chaired by the Conservative MP Kenneth Warren, has not recommended that throwing government money at IT is the easiest solution to the UK's increasing trade deficit in information technology and electronics, that last year reached over £2 billion.

One particular bone of contention by the computer industry has been in the allocation of government contracts and it is likely to be pleased with the report's recommendation that the DTI should take further steps to help computer services companies grow through participation in major government projects (see below).

Some are still sceptical though, pointing to the large number of reports on the topic that have appeared over the past few years that have resulted in little action by the government.

Referring to two recent reports on the software industry, the committee concludes that "both point to the imaginative use by government of public procurement as a means of developing the software and services industry. What is lacking is any



Kenneth Warren: Money not the easiest solution

clear sign that the Government accepts this conclusion from the reports it has commissioned.

With this in mind, the committee recommends that individual government departments should have the freedom to deal directly with information technology suppliers.

It is also critical of the lack of use of IT by the Government and calls for a unit within the DTI specifically to promote its use and recommends the restoration of the post of IT minister.

There is a modest increase in funding suggested for projects between small firms and academic institutions, where the report recommends maximum funding should be increased to 75 per cent from the current 50 per cent.

The committee has also

taken issue with a report earlier last week from the DTI on the possibilities of installing a "national grid" of fibre optic cables that would provide all sorts of information and entertainment services to homes and business.

The DTI's communications steering group advises that there is no good reason for the Government to subsidize such an operation or change the restrictions on British Telecom which prevent it providing its own entertainment services on such a network, which BT argues it must be able to do to recoup the massive investment required.

The select committee urges the Government to make a clear policy statement on a national communications network which, it says, is a valuable example of something that would be of mutual benefit to government, commerce and industry.

On the shortage of skilled staff for the industry, the report describes the situation as deplorable, estimates the current shortage at 10 per cent and warns it will be "acutely aggravated by the demographic pattern."

The report recommends increasing the number of courses, such as those established by the IT Institute at Salford and the Cranfield Institute of Technology, which have been established by joint government and industry funding.

The DTI has two months to reply to the report.

EEC's telecom order opposed

The EEC decision last week to order member states to deregulate by 1991 the telecommunications services industry is likely to meet national opposition.

The decision was taken by the executive unilaterally under the founding treaty which allows the EEC to impose legislation to stop public monopolies distorting competition.

A similar move earlier this year to break national telecommunications authorities' monopolies in the consumer equipment market is being challenged in the European Court by France, supported by West Germany, Italy and Belgium.

The order would open up to private competition services such as data transmission, leased lines, electronic mail and financial data networks in stages by January 1991.

The Commission said that national telecommunications monopolies in certain countries restricted clients' use of infrastructure and charged "disproportionate" prices for services in relation to cost. These measures limited the supply of telecommunications services, it claimed.

It said that telecommunications services were growing fast and predicted that data transmission services would grow by 15 to 25 per cent a year once the market was deregulated.

The Commission will not put its order into effect immediately. It will consult with the member states on the terms of the legislation before giving the go-ahead in March.

The value of the telecommunications services market in the EEC is estimated at about 64 billion European currency units (£40 million).

IBM sale

In a tacit admission that its \$1.5 billion thrust into the telecommunications industry has stalled, IBM said last week it would sell its Rolm manufacturing and development operations to Siemens of West Germany. The terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Rolm, which was founded in California in 1969, is best known for its computerized switchboards for private branch exchanges.

Analysis said that the announcement by IBM was its acknowledgement that the grand integration of computers and telecommunications remains far in the future.



Working in the city: Firms are cutting their expenditure on technology and staff in a bid to get profitable again.

City cutbacks slow demand for high-tech employees

JOBS SCENE

By Leslie Tilley

The City was the place to be seen for high-tech professionals after the Government deregulated the securities market and dealers in shares swapped their places on the Stock Exchange floor for a seat in front of a terminal.

The top staff in the information technology industry suddenly had it all their own way as international firms raced to snap them up in a bid to get the skills needed to develop their computerized dealing systems in time for Big Bang in October 1986.

Salaries soared and it was a sellers' market for technology staff as they accepted the rich pickings from financial institutions, which one employment agent described as a "recruitment frenzy".

And it wasn't long before the £100,000 salary barrier was broken as one City firm looked for the right systems manager to control its high investment in technology.

Staff left their permanent jobs and flocked to the City as contractors' rates doubled because of the shortage of skilled staff, with some earning £1,500 a week.

Lots of market-makers and big companies went in on a Gung Ho basis and there was an unnatural boom from the data processing point of view.

"There was so much money going, which was very tempting for those in permanent employment," said Warwick Bergen, managing director of Resources International, which specializes in computer placements in the City.

Earlier this month, Morgan Grenfell made more than 400 staff redundant - 40 of them on the computing side - and Reuters recently reduced its worldwide staff by 5 per cent and cut 50 staff from its system development department.

Agencies believe there is little doubt this trend will continue and see some firms



Rhianon Chapman: A net loss of jobs

cutting their expenditure on technology and staff in a bid to get profitable again.

Contractors are often the first to go, according to Mr Bergen.

"Many high-fliers had their wings clipped. Some of the over-paid people might have been the first out as projects

pre-Big Bang days before the hurry-burry and recruitment is at a steady, reasonable pace. Firms are looking for quality and are not being forced into taking second best as there is now less haste and drama."

Salaries haven't come down; in fact they have started to increase at the same rate as the rest of the industry. Previously they were going up 15-30 per cent, but it is now about 10 per cent.

This is reflected in the latest Computer Economics salary survey, which says that salaries and bonus payments for system analysts and programmers in City financial institutions are still around 25 per cent higher than elsewhere.

But the survey points out that the situation is changing as the rate of increases in the City has begun to fall behind other regions by a small margin.

Interestingly, the number of resignations in inner London is less than outer London and the UK as a whole, which could show that staff are beginning to hang on to their jobs.

Mr Bergen said the number of staff his firm is placing in the finance sector has reduced by up to 20 per cent, but no staff are out of work as there is a shortage of computing skills and so many are now working in non-financial sectors - a message repeated by other recruitment agencies which do a lot of business in the City.

He added that firms are reducing their reliance on contractors, which accounted for about 75 per cent of placements before; it is now more like 50 per cent, and going for permanent staff instead.

The International Stock Exchange (ISE) which has been a heavy employer of IT staff in the past has placed a freeze on the number of staff it employs. "We have also cut down quite significantly the number of contractors we use," said Rhianon Chapman, director of personnel at the ISE.

"There was always a tendency to have contractors to fill permanent posts but now we use only contractors on short-term projects. We are looking to make more use out of the people we have," she said.

One agency said that contractors used to be employed on average for two years in the

Freeze by ISE on its staff numbers

City but this is now down to nine months.

Mrs Chapman said that the demand for staff is good, though there will be a net loss of jobs over the next few years.

However, this has to be placed against the fact that there has been a large increase in the number of jobs in the City over the last few years.

Mrs Chapman believes that being made redundant for IT staff may not be such a bad thing for those that get reasonable severance pay as most have little trouble in finding another job quickly because of the shortages.

A Continental look for high-technology

Will 1992 be a re-run of 1966? Britain's success in European high-tech will be credible only if the industry has the firm support of its largest customer - the public sector.

This still accounts for almost 40 per cent of UK spending and the Government still takes from the British information technology industry more in taxation than it returns in purchases, and more than 10 times as much as it returns in other support, whether for research or for training.

The brief for the Trade and Industry Committee's new report on IT was an examination of "the expenditure and policy of the Department of Trade and Industry on information technology."

Much of the industry evidence to that committee has been concerned with government procurement policy, or the lack of it.

It is clear that the British information technology industry wants trade, not aid, from the Government. However, the lack of a policy for information technology, or even a belief in the need for one, also emerges all too clearly from the evidence given to the committee.

Unlike their Japanese counterparts, it seems that senior DTI officials did not accept that IT is a "meta-technology" whose prosperity is of fundamental importance

By Philip Virgo
British technology needs trade rather than sponsorship from the DTI

to the rest of the economy. They appear to have believed that it was a passing political enthusiasm.

Are the Japanese, for example, wrong and the British correct not to concentrate on high technology and commercially experienced officials on policy for any one industrial area?

However, even if it is agreed that we should have a policy, is there the basis of consensus for a credible and effective policy to be sustained over the necessary period of time?

Given the inability of the British to organize effective

nationally co-ordinated activity in peacetime, what should that new IT policy, if any, be? Despite the great success of the largest civilian central government project yet undertaken - the computerization of PAYE by the Inland Revenue - the lessons do not appear to have been learned elsewhere in government.

Customers tend to get the suppliers they deserve. If they wish to improve the products and service on offer, they need to learn from Marks & Spencer, and work closely with their suppliers to improve both quality and reliability.

The inability of the UK software industry to tender credibly on its own for very large government software developments is a direct result of public sector procurement.

The weakness of the UK packaged software and computer-based learning industries can similarly be largely attributed to the lack of bulk purchasing opportunities in the public sector.

The influence of the Government, as far as away the largest direct and indirect customer for the UK information technology industry, is far greater than the influence of DTI as a sponsoring department.

Whether that influence is used to encourage inward investment or to encourage indigenous industries, the consequences of the failure to recognize its importance are far-reaching.

The chief executive of a leading American-owned IT firm in Britain says the British are polite and welcoming, emphasizing open competition for government business and investment opportunities, whereas the French and Germans are often quite brutal, emphasizing the business available if an R & D plant is placed here, or the contracts which will cease if a manufacturing plant is not placed there.

His directors prefer to visit Britain, but the advanced manufacturing plants and development centres tend to go to France or Germany.

In his evidence to the select committee, the chief executive of IBM emphasized the expense and delays inherent in UK Government procurement procedures. If IBM finds it expensive and cumbersome, how do smaller firms manage?

Not surprisingly, many smaller UK high-tech companies do not even try to bid directly for central government business at all.

The author is director of IT Strategy Services, a consultancy that specializes in technology and strategy appraisal.

Why the scientists are growing square trees

By Nick Nuttall

Admirers of the 19th-century mathematician and author Lewis Carroll can be excused for remaining unimpressed by the genetic engineering and biotechnology achievements of late 20th century science.

Box-shaped tomatoes for easy packing, sheep that shed their fleeces and motor pigs - part porker, part human growth hormone gene - must appear pretty small beer when you have peered through the looking glass and seen white rabbits telling the time, eggs that talk and doormice attending tea parties.

But even the usually unimpressed must surely feel a pulse beat over the research of Robert Falls, an environmental scientist and bio-engineer working at the University of British Columbia.

Appalled at the vast quantities of wood wasted when the trees are sliced up into lumber "it came to me that there had to be a better way," says Mr Falls.

His notion is simple: a designer tree of decidedly squarish appearance which,

when sawed up at the mill, would reduce the level of discarded trunk.

What sparked the scientist to believe such dreams were possible was his earlier work on tree shape and wood formation in plants persistently battered by winds.

Unusual structures form, with one side of the trunk making wood faster and creating an area of acutely thickened stem.

The cells which control and produce wood affecting a trunk's ultimate geometry are

Up to 38 pc more carbon dioxide

called cambial cells, which reside just under the bark.

"I thought if you could somehow turn the mechanism which controls growth on and off and even enhance it at certain points you might get that desired square effect," says Mr Falls.

Harnessing techniques which he prefers to call bio-resource engineering rather than genetic engineering - "I cannot go into details as we

have a patent pending; all I can say is that it is not gene splicing," he has already looked a dozen trees.

The four-year-old square Western-bred cedars Black Cottonwoods - a native popular - are growing on land close to the university and, claims Mr Falls, studies have shown the wood quality is identical to their round cousins.

"You get more cells at four points round the stem not bigger ones. We are simply managing to accelerate wood formation at these sites. I suppose the bottom line is that we are altering the way the genes of the cambial cells express themselves at these four areas," he explained.

Mr Falls believes the pioneering of square trees has not only important resource implications for the timber industry but also the environment.

He claims that by bio-engineering an acceleration in wood growth, the trees are consuming up to 38 per cent more carbon dioxide - a constituent gas of the so-called greenhouse effect.

He said there had been inquiries from lumber companies throughout America and hinted that one British timber firm had also expressed an interest in his square trees.

Gordon Browning, a tree physiologist at the Institute of Horticultural Research in East Malling, Kent, said he had also been struck by the notion of a square tree.

"We injected the hormone in at three points but were unsuccessful at getting sprouting. However, there was one strange side effect. We ended up with a triangular tree," said Mr Browning.

The work was eventually abandoned - not just because the bark split after a few years of growth but also because "we couldn't see any economic reason for having triangular trees" explained the scientist.

GM wants its orders down the telephone

By Richard Sarson

General Motors plans in the next two years to persuade all its 2000 suppliers in seven European countries to pass invoices and orders down telephone lines rather than by paper.

This will make General Motors the largest electronic data interchange (EDI) community in Europe and double the number of companies trading electronically in Europe. It is believed that its nearest rival, Ford, has fewer than 300 suppliers connected to Fordnet at the moment.

The network will be managed for GM by its data processing subsidiary EDI and based round its computer centres in the UK, West Germany, Spain and The Netherlands. Unlike Ford, which runs its own dedicated EDI network, GM will be using third-party networks to link its suppliers to the GM computers.

It is not giving all its

business to one network-supplier, but choosing whoever it considers strongest in each country.

So far, a common international standard has yet to be put into practice so the network will have to cope with several different systems and translate the messages into a common format.

John Wisbey, an EDS chief executive, said that with so many network operators and message standards, the GM network will be the first "open" EDI network in Europe, as well as being the largest and most multi-national.

An average EDI transaction passes from computer to computer in about 13 seconds, compared to five minutes by telex and two days by letter, he argues. GM needs the extra speed, particularly as the number of parts supplied across Europe's borders rises in the run up to 1992.

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Mitchell Platts, Golf Correspondent, reviews a year in which a Briton won the US Masters for the first time

When Lyle became the biggest shot of all

It is almost 220 yards, every inch of it uphill, from the 18th tee at Augusta National to the bunkers which eat into the left side of the fairway. To Sandy Lyle it seemed like an Everest. He had watched, horrified, as his one-iron shot moved right to left, rather than fading as he had intended, and the ball disappeared from sight.

"Oh, no," Lyle thought. "It's in the sand." He was not wrong.

Lyle sprinted up the hill. Earlier, he thought he had given away the Masters by taking five at the short 12th. His frustration increased as he failed to extract a birdie from either the long 13th or 15th holes. Yet he still arrived on the 18th tee with a famous victory within his grasp. "I heard no roar from the 18th green, so I knew that Mark Calcavecchia had not made a birdie," Lyle recalled. "I knew I needed a par to tie him."

Lyle reached the bunker. He sighed with relief. He had feared the ball would be too close to the steep face, so eliminating the possibility of going for the green. He was wrong. Dave Musgrove, Lyle's caddy, looked on.

Panace before the ball rolled back

"We were not saying too much," Lyle added. "But I knew, as soon as I saw the ball, that all was okay. It was on a launching pad, so to speak, so I couldn't bury it in the face. The one thing I didn't want to do was hit the ball heavy. I did not want to put it in the bunkers in front of the green. I knew I could not work from there."

Lyle asked Musgrove for his seven-iron. "As soon as I struck it I knew it would be close," he said. "I got the perfect, clean hit and I had visions of the ball finishing within four feet. The last place I thought it would pitch was where it did."

In fact, the ball landed approximately 28 feet above the hole where, for one moment, it looked like staying until, as if by command, it began to gently roll back towards the cup. "It was gravity, not spit, that brought

FINAL PLACINGS FOR 1983

World rankings

	Pts
1 S Ballesteros (Sp)	1,438
2 G Norman (Aus)	1,395
3 A Lyle (GB)	1,297
4 N Faldo (GB)	1,103
5 C Strange (US)	1,082
6 J Crenshaw (US)	898
7 J Woollam (GB)	854
8 J Frost (SA)	844
9 J Lister (GB)	825
10 M Calcavecchia (US)	819
11 M Ozaki (Jpn)	781
12 C Beck (US)	770
13 T Sjö (Swe)	726
14 L Wadkins (US)	696
15 B Langer (WGer)	696
16 P Stewart (US)	661
17 G Green (US)	645
18 M McNulty (Zim)	640
19 F Couples (US)	629
20 J-H Oosthuis (Sp)	629

European tour

	Pts
1 S Ballesteros (Sp)	451,559.59
2 N Faldo (GB)	347,971.47
3 J-H Oosthuis (Sp)	285,594.54
4 J Woollam (GB)	234,580.84
5 A Lyle (GB)	186,017.58
6 M McNulty (Zim)	180,991.55
7 D Smith (Ire)	171,551.02
8 M Lister (GB)	162,510.37
9 R Rafferty (GB)	152,594.69
10 J Rivera (Sp)	131,079.42
11 S Brand Jr (US)	129,258.70
12 H Clark (GB)	124,373.54
13 B Lane (GB)	119,209.83
14 S Darcy (Ire)	112,335.22
15 P Senior (Aus)	103,101.47
16 R Chapman (GB)	99,758.15
17 M Moland (GB)	95,580.55
18 J Mackay (GB)	91,580.55
20 D Durrant (GB)	84,509.32

US PGA money-list

	Pts
1 C Strange (US)	\$1,147,644
2 C Beck (US)	916,818
3 J Sander (US)	813,732
4 K Green (US)	779,181
5 J Kite (US)	750,405
6 M Calcavecchia (US)	751,912
7 A Lyle (GB)	726,534
8 J Crenshaw (US)	696,995

it back," Lyle said. "Either that, or everybody at the back of the green blowing with all their might."

Lyle took his putter. The ball had come to rest nine feet from the hole. "I was still thinking 'four,'" Lyle said. "I could not think about a birdie."

"It was still a nasty putt. Not that fast, but one I had to get on line. I thought it might go a little to the right. I was pious and needless at the time. I just wanted to get the putt on its way. I knew when I hit the ball that it had a chance of going in. When it did, there was about two seconds I simply could not believe what I had done."

Lyle had, of course, become the first British golfer to win

McEvoy's record unsurpassable

It was a memorable achievement, as was that of Great Britain and Ireland in the Eisenhower Trophy, which is the world amateur team championship. Peter McEvoy had earlier in the year passed, in the Home Internationals, the record number of points accumulated by an English player. The previous owner of that honour was Michael Bonallack.

McEvoy won outright the individual trophy in the Eisenhower and, along with Garth McGimpsey, Jim Milligan and Eoghan O'Connell, took the team honours.

Russell Claydon won the English Amateur at Royal Birkdale, but he is unlikely to achieve in the amateur game anything to surpass McEvoy. That is because the professional game, with its salaries of dollars, francs, marks, pounds and yen, is too much of a lure to resist.

Christian Hardin, the first Swedish player to win the British Amateur championship, who carried to France for the first time the British Youths' title, underlined the growing strength of players on the Continent.

Yet no one did so more conclusively than Marie-Laure de Lorenzi de Taya, who became the first Frenchwoman to win the Woodmark Order of Merit on the Women's Professional Golfers European Tour.

Liselotte Neumann, of Sweden, followed her.

Strange, of course, executed a recovery shot from the bunker at the 18th with immense skill at The Country Club, Brookline, to tie Nick Faldo. Strange won the play-off over 18 holes the following day, and fortune also swung cruelly against Faldo in the Open Championship and the US PGA Championship.

Naturally, the summer did not entirely belong to the professionals. Diane Bailey had captured Great Britain and Ireland to a glorious victory in the Curtis Cup in Kansas in 1982, and she did so again at Royal St. George's.

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den, did wonderfully well to follow in the footsteps of Laura Davies by winning the US Open, but closer to home the erudite De Taya, the mother of a four-year-old daughter, Laura, won seven times. Corrine Dibnah, of Australia, escaped De Taya's clutches to win the Westbrix British Open at Lindrick.

It was a less than satisfactory season for another Australian. Greg Norman sustained a wrist injury, his fortunes waned and Severiano Ballesteros, leader of the Volvo Order of Merit, regained the No. 1 place in the Sony world rankings.

In Europe, Bernhard Langer, afflicted once more by the putting yips, retreated in the Order of Merit as did Sam Torrance. But Des Smyth and Roman Rafferty, who with Eamonn Darcy won for Ireland the Dunhill Cup, enjoyed meritorious years.

Peter Baker and Barry Lane, who won the Benson and Hedges International and the Bell's Scottish Open respectively, made an impact. Roger Chapman continued to improve and Mark James enjoyed his best season.

Changing line-up for Ryder Cup

There will be new faces in both the European and United States teams when the Ryder Cup, sponsored by Johnnie Walker, takes place at the Belfry next year. Clive Beck, Joey Sindelar and Ken Green, who recently won in Japan, where Jumbo Ozaki recorded six wins during the year and earned in excess of \$1 million (about £550,000), are the most likely candidates for the Americans.

Even so, Strange is without doubt the No. 1 player in the United States, and he led the money list with a record of \$1,147,644.

I give that to Ballesteros, a winner in seven countries, by a short head from Lyle. The Spaniard produced golf of the highest calibre to parry Nick Price's thrust in the Open at Royal Lytham and St. Anne's in July. But who will ever forget the shot with which Lyle won the Masters?



No. 1 woman: Marie-Laure de Lorenzi de Taya, of France, dominated the European tour

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Giants are denied a place

By Robert Kirby

The New York Giants, who lost to the New York Jets 27-21 on Sunday, failed to advance to the National Football League playoffs when the Los Angeles Rams surprised the San Francisco 49ers 36-16 to reach the playoffs as a wild-card entry. The Philadelphia Eagles won the NFC East division with a 23-7 win against the Dallas Cowboys. The Houston Oilers lost to the Cleveland Browns 28-23 and will return to Cleveland in the AFC wild-card game on Saturday. The winner of the Cleveland-Houston game will meet the Buffalo Bills in an AFC semi-final.

Buffalo could have guaranteed themselves the home advantage throughout the playoffs with a win over the Indianapolis Colts, but they sustained their first defeat within their division when the Indianapolis Colts won 14-10. Buffalo

will enter the play-offs having lost three of their last four games. The Cincinnati Bengals, 20-17 overtime winners against the Washington Redskins on Saturday, have the home edge over Buffalo in the AFC.

The Seattle Seahawks won the AFC West with a 43-37 win over the Los Angeles Raiders. The Seahawks, who earned their first division title in 12 seasons, will play the Bengals in the conference semi-finals. The Raiders could have finished first in the division with a victory.

RESULTS: Indianapolis 17, Buffalo 14; Tampa Bay 27, New Orleans 24; Houston 28, Cleveland 23; Philadelphia 27, Dallas 23; New York Jets 27, New York Giants 21; San Diego 24, Kansas City 17; Seattle 43, LA Raiders 31; LA Rams 26, San Francisco 20.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL CONTINUED

1 - Buffalo Bills 14, Indianapolis Colts 10

2 - New York Jets 27, New York Giants 21

3 - San Diego 24, Kansas City 17

4 - Seattle 43, LA Raiders 31

5 - Tampa Bay 27, New Orleans 24

6 - Houston 28, Cleveland 23

7 - Philadelphia 27, Dallas 23

8 - Seattle 43, LA Raiders 31

9 - Tampa Bay 27, New Orleans 24

10 - Houston 28, Cleveland 23

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18 - Houston 28, Cleveland 23

19 - Philadelphia 27, Dallas 23

20 - Seattle 43, LA Raiders 31

21 - Tampa Bay 27, New Orleans 24

22 - Houston 28, Cleveland 23

23 - Philadelphia 27, Dallas 23

POOLERS FORECAST

by Paul Newman

Forecasts for the next two weeks are published today because of the Christmas/New Year holiday

Monday December 26

THIRD DIVISION

1 Brentford v Blackpool

2 Bury v Walsley

3 Carlisle v Swindon

4 Chester v Wigan

5 Colchester v Grimsby

6 Gillingham v Fulham

7 Luton v Port Vale

8 Notts Co v Sheffield U

9 Preston v Bolton

10 Reading v Aldershot

11 Southampton v Notts

12 Torquay v Stockport

13 Watford v Barnet

14 Walsley v Walsley

15 Walsley v Walsley

16 Walsley v Walsley

17 Walsley v Walsley

18 Walsley v Walsley

19 Walsley v Walsley

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27 Walsley v Walsley

SPORTS MEDICINE

A way for GPs to specialize

By Louise Taylor

A significant number of the patients assembled in the waiting rooms of their doctors' surgeries on a typical Monday morning are there because of injuries incurred while playing sport. Yet until this week sports medicine had not been an official recognition as a specialization in Britain. That has all changed with a new diploma in sports medicine, announced by the Society of Apothecaries in London.

The inaugural examinations, which will be held next June, will lead to the first open qualification in sports medicine for doctors in the United Kingdom. Available to registered medical graduates, the diploma, in sport, the diploma is aimed at doctors undertaking sporting duties such as attachments to football clubs.

Recognized courses are presently run on a one-year, full-time basis at the University of London and part-time by the London Sports Medicine Institute (LSMI) and the British Association of Sport and Medicine (BASM) and cover not only the treatment of injuries but also areas such as nutrition, ethical and social aspects of sports medicine, environmental physiology and pharmacology.

The courses are London-based and are run by the London Sports Medicine Institute (LSMI) and the British Association of Sport and Medicine (BASM) and cover not only the treatment of injuries but also areas such as nutrition, ethical and social aspects of sports medicine, environmental physiology and pharmacology.

It is a move welcomed by a host of high-profile sporting figures, including Sebastian Coe. "As a recipient of medical treatment for sports injuries, I know first-hand what a tremendous impact proper care can have on the career of a sportsman or woman," he said. "I know British sport will reap the benefits for years to come."

Coe's sentiments were echoed by Joe Patton, of the Sports Council's sports development unit. "We feel that sports medicine in this country has been under-valued and this diploma is the first major step forward for a number of years."

Part of the problem has been a popular perception of sports injuries as the self-inflicted aberrations of fit people. As Dr Dan Tunstall Pecoe, the chairman of BASM and the medical director of the LSNM, said: "It is the Government's wish to encourage people that exercise is good for them, they are aware of the slight negative side which involves people getting injured."

Mr. Kilm, a London GP, who is studying part-time for the diploma, confirmed: "An average of 5-10 per cent of all patients visiting their GPs do so because of sports injuries and in some cases this can rise to 20 or 30 per cent, particularly after the weekend."

The irony of this is, as Kilm said, "that in six years of medical training maybe five minutes are spent on sports injuries."

OVERSEAS FOOTBALL

Maradona scores twice as Napoli close on leaders

By Keith Blackmore

Goals by the Brazilian forward Caracciola and Maradona brought Napoli a point closer to Inter Milan at the top of the Italian first division on Sunday.

Caracciola's ninth goal of the season and Maradona's fifth and sixth gave Napoli a 3-1 win against Bologna, while Inter drew with Juventus, thereby dropping their first home point of the season.

Serena, a former Juventus player, scored for Inter; Abubakar, a former Inter player, scored for Juventus. The two goals by the Dutchman, Van Basten, gave the champions, AC Milan, a point at Torino, who sacked their manager, Reda, last week. Mailer, another Brazilian forward, scored twice for Torino.

Paris Saint-Germain, who lost the leadership of the French first division to Auxerre last week, regained it on Saturday. A goal by the Argentinian forward, Calderon, gave them a win against Caen while Auxerre went down heavily to Cannes.

Marseille, who revived hopes of retaining the championship by beating PSG last week, suffered again, drawing at home with Toulon.

The result puts them in fifth place, nine points adrift as the championship goes into hibernation for two months. In a French cup match, five players were sent off and seven booked as Reims beat Metz 2-0.

Snow and gale force wind forced the postponement of three first division games in Greece on Sunday but they failed to prevent the Hungarian midfielder player, Lajos Detari, from having a rare good day with Olympiakos.

Olympiakos paid Eintracht Frankfurt £4.7 million for Detari last summer, making him the third most expensive player in the world behind Gullit and Maradona, but since then little has gone right for him or his new club.

Olympiakos have suffered financial difficulties and Detari was missing from the team for months because of a knee injury suffered pre-season.

He put these troubles behind him on Sunday, scoring both goals as Olympiakos beat Diagoras 2-0 and moved into second place behind AEK Athens in the first division.

The Turkish champions, Galatasaray, who have been penalized already this season by UEFA for crowd trouble during a European cup match, had further trouble on Saturday. Police arrested 60 people after incidents, which included the petrol bombing of a police car, after the match with Beşiktaş.

In Lisbon, 100,000 supporters saw Benfica beat Sporting 2-0. In the Portuguese first division, Benfica lead Porto by four points and Sporting by eight.

League matches in Spain were postponed because of the World Cup fixture with Northern Ireland tomorrow. West Germany, Austria and Switzerland have already begun their winter breaks.

Houghton award Ray Houghton, of Liverpool, has been named the 100 Pipers Anglo-Scott of the Year by a panel of leading Anglo-Scottish football journalists. Houghton is the third successive Liverpool player to win the award - the previous two winners being Alan Hansen in 1986 and Steve Nicol in 1987.

STUDENT SPORT

Team size may be cut down

By Yuri Matichsen

The Sports Council has provided £60,500 towards the British students team of up to 200 athletes and officials to help with travelling to the world student games in Sao Paulo next year.

The British Students Sports Federation (BSSF) is however disappointed not to have been given more as the cost of sending the team is likely to exceed £100,000.

In all probability the BSSF must now reduce the numbers of competitors and may have to withdraw from one or more of the 11 sports. This presents a difficult task as the federation has had to proceed with selection so that a worthwhile preparation programme can be completed. Although sponsorship arrangements have supplied some encouragement with STA Travel's continued involvement ensuring substantially reduced travel costs, it had been hoped to avoid this situation.

It would be important for the British students to compete in full and with reasonable success next year as Sheffield host the next games in 1991. For the men's and women's team sports athletes and their support staff, the search for extra funds is urgent.

As it stands each student selected for Sao Paulo will be asked to contribute £400 towards the cost of participation. This remains the single biggest source of income. Searching for such a large personal contribution places an added pressure on athletes and is a search for extra funds.

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ICE HOCKEY

Wasps finally come down to earth

By Norman de Mesquita

Durham Wasps have been beaten at last. After a winning run of 25 Norwich Union ice hockey leagues games since the beginning of the season, they finally tasted defeat, although it looked unlikely when they led Murrayfield Racers 3-0 in the 14th minute.

The Racers, however, had a marvellous second period, scoring six times without reply, and they withstood a late Wasps rally to take over from them at the top of the premier division.

On Sunday, Peterborough Panthers nearly spoilt Racers' weekend, but the player/coach, Louis Hamen, broke away to score with just 15 seconds remaining to give Racers a win by the odd goal in 25.

Elsewhere it was penalties rather than goals that made the difference. Both Nottingham Panthers and Strathmore Redskins combining for 140 minutes on Saturday and then Redskins Whitely Warriors combining for 96 minutes on Sunday.

The were unsavoury scenes in the Solihull Barons/Fife Flyers game on Sunday with players ejected for leaving the bench to join a brawl. It was started by the Barons' goalkeeper, Woodward, who was fortunate to stay in the game, the referee having missed his initial involvement. In the division one game, between Tefford Tigers and Cleveland Bombers, 80 minutes were assessed, the total boosted by a third period incident.

Referees come in for a great deal of criticism, some of it perhaps justified, but one must question the influence of coaches. With enough self-discipline, the team has no need to become involved in such excess and the sport is a lot better for it.

RESULTS:

Five-man team to take the field for United at FA

By Louise Taylor

The tackiest football squabble of 1988 reaches a climax today when John Fashanu, of Wimbledon, and Viv Anderson, of Manchester United, appear before the Football Association on charges of bringing the game into disrepute.

Arising from a now infamous post-match "incident" in the Plough Lane tunnel on November 1 when Fashanu was alleged to have struck Anderson, the case has given rise to a welter of accusations and denials.

Alex Ferguson, the Manchester United manager who has provided the FA's disciplinary committee with a written statement, is anxious that the inquiry should vindicate Anderson and, accordingly, United are dispatching a five-man representation to Lancaster Gate.

Martin Edwards, the chair-

man, Maurice Watkins, a director and the club's solicitor, and Steve Bruce, a defender who is expected to be called as an eye-witness, are also making the journey to London where the case will be heard by a five-strong panel, chaired by Jeff Thompson, head of the disciplinary committee.

Ferguson is particularly angry that, in the days following the incident, Fashanu questioned both his word and his submitted evidence. Fashanu has claimed that, in the confusion which followed the alleged assault or assaults, the United manager mistakenly accused the wrong man in Eric Young, the Wimbledon defender. The United manager is determined that his name, and that of his club, is in no way tarnished.

Clearly surprised by the size of the turn-out, an FA spokesman said yesterday: "We were

not aware that United planned to be so strongly represented but we do not know Wimbledon's plans."

Fashanu claims he is innocent of any charges and Wimbledon are expected to produce witnesses on his behalf with Bobby Gould, the manager, certain to attend. He is not only concerned about the prospect of Fashanu receiving a lengthy suspension but the effect the incident has already had on the forward's career.

"Ever since it happened he has been physically and mentally drained," Gould said. "It has been like a tail sentence hanging over him. This sort of thing takes its toll, no matter how strong you are and how much character you have."

"I can honestly say that John has battled through, but his performances have been below par. It is not really surprising, but let us hope that after this week we can return to some sort of normality."

Fashanu said: "The idea of a long standing feud is absolute fabrication. The fact is that I am innocent. If I really had hit him there would have been a lot more damage."

"Manchester United are sending lawyers while I will not be represented by a solicitor but hopefully my case is strong enough to prove my innocence."

The FA's disciplinary panel will reconvene on Thursday to decide on the punishment for Mark Dennis, of Queens Park Rangers, who incurred the twelfth sending-off of his career during a reserve match on December 6. The dismissal was for allegedly spitting at an opponent. Dennis, booked for the 68th time in his career on Saturday, has protested his innocence and is being backed by the club.

More football, page 29

Smith is ready to sell Mirandinha

By Ian Ross

Jim Smith, the Newcastle United manager, yesterday hinted that he may sell Mirandinha, their Brazilian international forward. After rejecting a bid by Zaragoza, the Spanish club, to take Mirandinha on loan, Smith said that he was now ready to listen to any offers.

"Zaragoza asked to take Mirandinha on loan, but I refused. They have no money so I could not see the point. As he is an international player, they must already know all about him," he said.

"I would consider any offer for Mirandinha in the same way I would for most other Newcastle players. For the moment he will stay at St

James's Park," Smith said. However, Smith's hopes of persuading Charlton Athletic to part with John Humphrey, the experienced right back, ended when the London club rejected a £400,000 package deal to include John Corver.

"Humphrey is too useful for us to lose but we did think long and hard before rejecting the offer," Lennie Lawrence, the Charlton manager, said.

Although surprised, Smith is expected to make renewed attempts to sign Humphrey in the New Year. "I thought that the deal was a certainty to go through. I think that they want him for the Christmas period but I may have another look," Smith said.

Players await curtain to fall on pantomime cricket tour

By Alan Lee, Cricket Correspondent

The tour that nobody wants is likely to be abandoned today, England, rejected by India and snubbed by Pakistan, are prepared for the news that the New Zealand authorities are neither rich nor foolish enough to press on blindly with an ill-fated invitation.

New Zealand's Cricket Council, having gone through the motions of investigating possible new itineraries for England after Pakistan's withdrawal from the one-day competition on which the tour's finances were based, is expected to make a regretful call to Lord's today.

No one should blame it if it takes the obvious step and calls it off. Indeed, I suspect that some high-ranking English officials, not to mention some notable players, will be silently thankful if a tour of little cricketing merit but real political danger was consigned to the pile of casualties associated with South Africa.

The Test and County Cricket Board, having initially been grateful to sit back and let New Zealand do the worrying, is showing signs of impatience with the tiresome saga which stretches back to the first hint of Indian outrage

over Graham Gooch's appointment as captain almost four months ago.

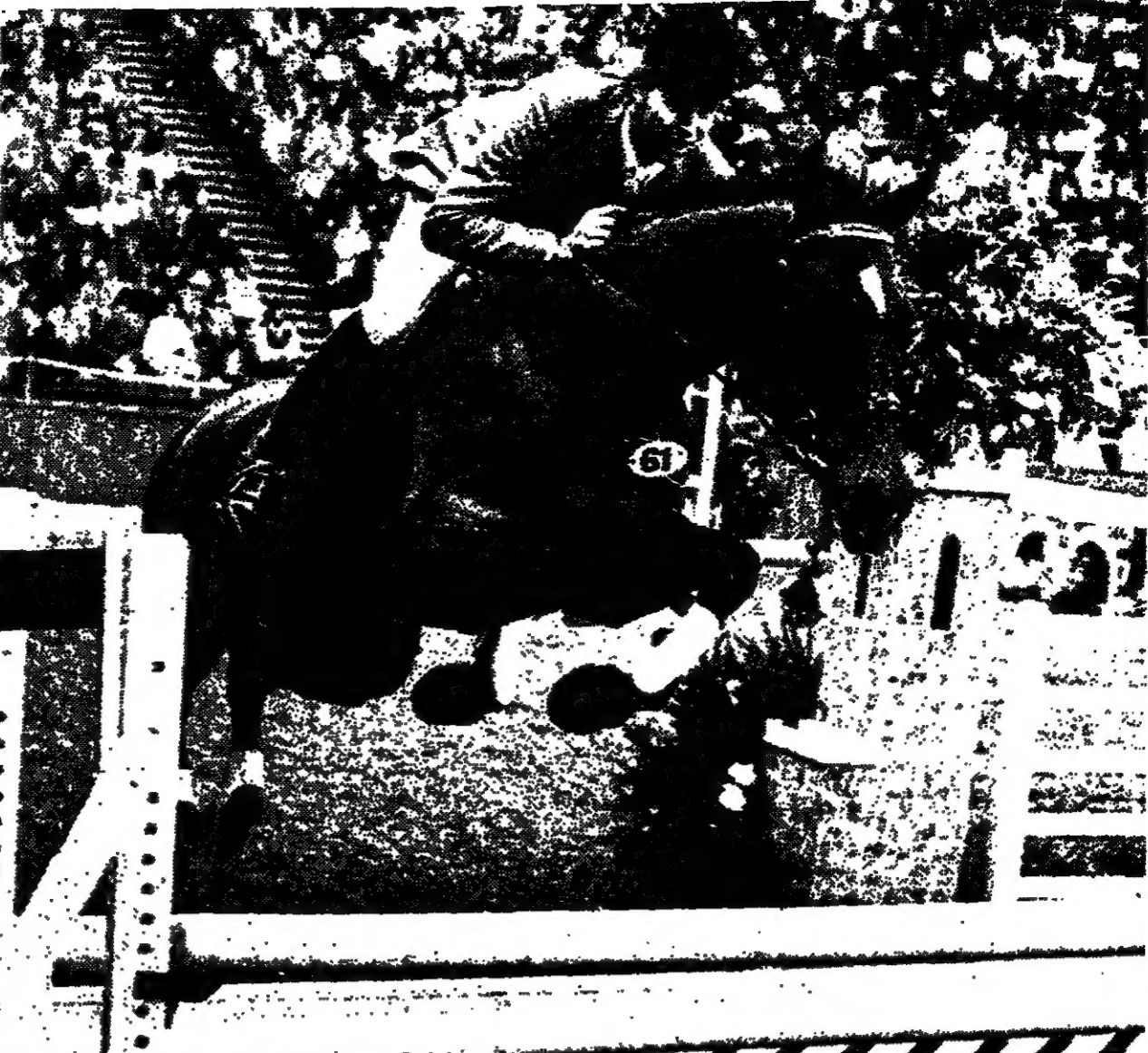
Alan Smith, the TCCB chief executive, said last night: "There are practical pressures at our end for a decision before Christmas because time is pressing on. But we do appreciate that New Zealand are the ones who have to find grounds, organize sponsors and arrange television coverage."

Judging by the negative commercial and public response to last winter's England tour of New Zealand, which included a properly constituted Test series rather than the token gesture planned this time, sponsors and television companies will not be scrapping to sign a contract.

It will, of course, be wretched luck on the England novices, such as Lawrence, Newport, Russell and Rhodes, if another touring opportunity slips into the political gutter. But in the broader, long-term interests of the game cancellation will bring down a welcome curtain on this pantomime and concentrate everyone's mind on the momentous matters due for decision at next month's meeting of the International Cricket Conference.

Certain English voices have been raised, hotly and irrationally demanding a total ban on overseas players as a revenge measure.

More cricket, page 28



Show stopper: Franke Sloothak, of West Germany, on his way to first of two victories at Olympia yesterday

Riders want more prize-money

By Jenny MacArthur

Franke Sloothak, a member of the West German Olympic gold medal-winning team, won two classes at the Olympia Show Jumping championships yesterday, but said afterwards that he would not be coming to the show again unless the prize-money and the courses improved.

Sloothak, who won the Crosse and Blackwell Mince Pie Stakes — worth £600 — on the eight-year-old German bred Leandra and, on the same horse, the Christmas Jigsaw jointly with Thomas Fruhmann — worth £350 each — said that he and the other West Germans "did not find it very interesting competing at Olympia any more — Alan Ball's courses are always the same and the prize-money is not high enough."

"It's not that we don't like

coming to Olympia — the atmosphere and the public are the best anywhere — but the show is not keeping up with many of the others."

David Broome supported Sloothak's comments. "The prize-money hasn't changed for 10 years has it?" he said yesterday. The prize-money at Olympia during the five days of jumping is £82,500. Foreigners have to pay 27 per cent tax on their winnings.

The Olympia prize fund compares unfavourably with some of the new shows on the Continent. Stuttgart in October, in its fourth year, offers £160,000 over four days plus a Mercedes car. The Grenoble Show, which highlighted Olympia's shortcomings by running at the same time, has a prize fund of more than £100,000 over four days plus four cars. John Whitaker, who

won £20,000 at Grenoble on Sunday, could not have matched that figure at Olympia even if he had won the World Cup qualifier and the grand prix.

Raymond Brooks-Ward, the director of Olympia, who said he was grateful to Sloothak and the other top riders for coming to Olympia rather than Grenoble, acknowledged that the show has fallen behind in its prize-money, although it has kept up with inflation. "It's a problem shared with many of the World Cup shows excluding Bordeaux (£100,000 over three days). There's no question about it, if we're going to maintain our position in the World Cup we've got to raise our prize-money. What we're not going to do is join in a rat race over the money."

He pointed out that Olym-

pia offers free stabling and has also waived starting fees charging a block entry fee of £10 for each rider.

On the subject of the course-building, Brooks-Ward said that the show normally employs a foreign course designer but the one they wanted this year, Philippe Geyot, could not come because he had been booked by Grenoble.

RESULTS: Crosse and Blackwell Mince Pie Stakes: 1. Leandra (F. Sloothak, GER), 2. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 3. 35.05; 2. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 3. 35.05; 3. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 4. 35.05; 4. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 5. 35.05; 5. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 6. 35.05; 6. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 7. 35.05; 7. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 8. 35.05; 8. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 9. 35.05; 9. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 10. 35.05; 10. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 11. 35.05; 11. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 12. 35.05; 12. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 13. 35.05; 13. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 14. 35.05; 14. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 15. 35.05; 15. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 16. 35.05; 16. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 17. 35.05; 17. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 18. 35.05; 18. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 19. 35.05; 19. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 20. 35.05; 20. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 21. 35.05; 21. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 22. 35.05; 22. Nicomede (R. V. Root, FR), 23. 35.05; 23. 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